



2018 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire

Please return by Friday, August 31 to:

Sorr@ACLUAk.org

For more information, call 907-263-2015

Candidate Name: Amber Lee

Employer: Self

Office Sought: House District 28

E-Mail Address: Amber@AmberLeeStateHouse.com

Party Affiliation: Democrat

Phone: 907-350-0486

Occupation: marketing and business

Mailing Address: 17211 Kings Way Dr, Anchorage 99516

1. What elements of Alaska's criminal justice reforms passed from 2016 to present do you support?

Response:

- Programs that will reduce recidivism
- Substance Abuse Treatment – In prison and community
- Transitional Support
- Victims' services
- Poverty shouldn't impact bail result
- Pre-trial Service Officers Program

2. What elements of Alaska's criminal justice reforms passed from 2016 to present do you believe should be amended further?

Response:

- We have to balance the rights of people who have been accused and the rehabilitated against public safety concerns.
- We need make larger investments in the programs that are supposed to be reducing recidivism.

- We need to look at issues that have decreased victims' rights – specifically domestic violence, public safety workers, and sexual offenders.
- We need to ensure that the definition of “violent crimes” falls within legitimate concerns for public safety.

3. Would you vote to keep the following elements of Alaska's justice reforms?

- **Tougher penalties on violent crimes like 1st and 2nd degree murder**
Yes or No? Explain: Yes. Murder is a much harder crime to prove than manslaughter, and as such, for a defendant to reach the bar of murder requires proof of a criminal intent that we agree the public deserves to be kept safe from.
- **Improved services for victims of violent crimes**
Yes or No? Explain: Yes. They deserve to feel safe and supported by the community. Victims' rights have been one of the most successful features in helping judges and juries sentence reach conclusions that are satisfactory for all parties. As a society, our belief in justice has to include the idea that victims deserve emotional and psychological restitution for those acts that have been committed against them.
- **Strengthened community supervision of those on probation and parole**
Yes or No? Explain: This needs to be better defined for me to answer, and overall it needs more study to determine its full role and function in a criminal justice system.
- **Expanded crime-reduction programs like violence prevention and substance abuse treatment**
Yes or No? Explain: Yes. Anything we can do to help people before they go to jail is good.
- **Expanded eligibility for parole to those with a record of good behavior who present minimal risk to the community**
Yes or No? Explain: Yes, where appropriate. There are myriad of crimes that are nonviolent, some of which probably don't need to be supervised. Others are questionable, like stalking.
- **Establishment of an oversight committee and mandatory data collection and reporting requirements to ensure the law is working as intended**
Yes or No? Explain: Maybe. It depends how it is put together. It's essential that the composition of any committee like this, has the principle purpose of protecting the public. Oversight of this data can't be political, because then the data always ends up supporting whatever legislation the majority has pushed through.
- **Limited jail time for people convicted of misdemeanors**
Yes or No? Explain: It depends. There has been a move to redefine some things that should be taken more seriously as misdemeanors.

- **Making drug possession a misdemeanor offense, while maintaining felony penalties for drug dealing and distribution**

Yes or No? Explain: No, because before the police were able to leverage the felony charge to find out who was supplying the drugs. They no longer have this tool.

- **Placing non-violent, low-risk defendants awaiting trial under community supervision instead of prison**

Yes or No? Explain: If you mean “third parties” that runs the risk of those people not having access to third parties and getting violations that they would not otherwise get.

4. **Under Alaska state law, inmates are required to be returned to the place of arrest, but this is rarely communicated to them and those from rural are often released from prison in urban areas without the means to return to their communities. This contributes to homelessness in urban areas as well as statewide recidivism. Do you support funding to ensure that parolees are returned to their place of arrest at the time of their release?**

Response: Yes, if desired by the individual to go back, we should support them to be in the best place for them.

5. **In 2015, President Obama removed the box requiring disclosure of prior criminal conviction from federal job employment applications. Do you support or oppose similar measures on the state level to increase employment opportunities for citizens who have paid their debt to society and want to lead productive lives?**

Response: Limited and proven expungement techniques exist in other jurisdictions outside of Alaska. Alaska ought not to follow Obama’s blanket criminal justice policy of removing all information but should rather allow judges to expunge records after an appropriate amount of time and once their debt to society has been paid.