



## 2018 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire

Please return by Friday, August 31 to:

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For more information, call 907-263-2015

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

Response: To address rising prison populations that coincided with increasing crime and persistently high recidivism, criminal justice reforms included over 60 recommendations made by the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission. Without going through each reform (but refer to question 3 for some specifics), I can say this: we know that funneling limited ballooning prison populations does not increase public safety. Public safety requires a balanced investment in law enforcement, behavioral health treatment and prevention, while maintaining consequences proportional to the severity of the crime.

The passage of criminal justice reform coincided with an economic downturn, the opioid epidemic, and a resulting increase in crime. Alaskans rightfully concerned about public safety increasingly saw criminal justice reform as part of the problem, and pressure mounted for legislators to scrap the reforms altogether and start from scratch.

My administration offered a different approach, an approach we believe is better for the safety of all Alaskans: we worked, and continue to work, to fix the parts of reform that are not working, in order to defend the many parts of the reform that are needed.

Pretrial reform was well intended: make release decisions about public safety risk rather than ability to pay bail. However, the tool to assess that risk was flawed. It didn't take into account out of state criminal history. When Alaskans saw individuals commit robbery, be arrested and released, and rob someone else right away – many lost trust in

reform and the criminal justice system. While many called for a total repeal, we pushed to address the specific problem by championing a bill to allow judges to consider out of state criminal history when assessing risk of reoffending. Making smart fixes like HB 312 will make Alaskans safer and build trust with the public.

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

Response: We are constantly looking at ways to improve and strengthen our public safety statutes, although we will remain skeptical of attempts to score cheap political points by conflating problems related to the opioid epidemic and fiscal crisis with criminal justice reform. We will continue to evaluate the efficacy of reforms, taking up recommendations of the Criminal Justice Commission and making amendments accordingly. Some examples of potential reforms that our team is currently considering:

- Amend the statute by amending penalties relating to heavy drug trafficking to better deter these activities in Alaska
- Legislation related to school safety and the administrative burden on school districts.
- Amendments to statute related to SAM 3 for sex offenses
- Increase maximum village size for Village Public Safety Officer eligibility from less than 1,000 to less than 2,000
- Remove marriage from being a defense to sexual assault when the acts are with someone who the offender knows is mentally incapable or incapacitated at the time of the act
- Allow reports of harm to be shared with a child's tribe; clarify that tribal governments with exclusive jurisdiction can receive reports of harm, investigate, and take action.
- Allow DHSS to set terms and eligibility requirements for the loan program in order to utilize the idle \$226,867.08 in the fund to support vulnerable Alaskans.
- Create a committee that will review data for drug overdoses in Alaska, provide information and insight surrounding the deaths and identify intervention and prevention opportunities.
- Enable APS to substantiate findings of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults

**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:
- **Improved services for victims of violent crimes**  
**Yes** or No? Explain:
- **Strengthened community supervision of those on probation and parole**  
**Yes** or No? Explain:

- **Expanded crime-reduction programs like violence prevention and substance abuse treatment**  
Yes or No? Explain:
- **Expanded eligibility for parole to those with a record of good behavior who present minimal risk to the community**  
Yes or No? Explain:
- **Establishment of an oversight committee and mandatory data collection and reporting requirements to ensure the law is working as intended**  
Yes or No? Explain:
- **Limited jail time for people convicted of misdemeanors**  
Yes or No? Explain:
- **Making drug possession a misdemeanor offense, while maintaining felony penalties for drug dealing and distribution**  
Yes or No? Explain:
- **Placing non-violent, low-risk defendants awaiting trial under community supervision instead of prison**  
Yes or No? Explain:

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: Reentrants do best when they have strong support systems in place. Right now, my team is in the process of providing grants to local community providers; so that we can release inmates back to their home communities, while still ensuring necessary programming, treatment, and supervision.

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: Nobody is well served when a reentrant has no economic opportunity. Increasing employment opportunities for reentrants is critical to reduce recidivism and improve public safety.