

1. As you have read in the news, the Alaska Division of Public Assistance has had chronic understaffing leading to a significant delay in individuals receiving critical supports such as Medicaid and SNAP ("food stamps"). How would you streamline eligibility requirements and program performance so people with disabilities can get and keep necessary services and benefits such as Medicaid, food assistance, and housing assistance?

I was a cosponsor of HB 344 which authorizes the Department of Health to implement "broad-based categorical eligibility," a Medicaid waiver that will streamline the application process, easing requirements to obtain SNAP benefits, and alleviating hunger for thousands of Alaskans. I will continue to champion initiatives like these to ensure that we are increasing accessibility to these critical services.

2. Alaskans with disabilities support a system in which each person directs their own supports, based on their strengths and abilities, toward a meaningful life in their home, their job and their community. How will you protect and support the rights of individuals with disabilities so that they can make informed decisions about their own healthcare and personal wellbeing, ensuring autonomy and access to necessary services?

I have always been an advocate for personal autonomy and protecting an individual's right to make their own healthcare decisions about their body. I will continue to support policies that ensure equal access to necessary healthcare and community-based services.

3. Individuals placed under court-appointed guardianship are adults who rely on their guardian to ensure they are housed, and their most basic needs are met. The guardian is also responsible for ensuring protected persons receive public benefits, on which protected persons typically depend. Currently, there is a lack of qualified guardians in the State of Alaska. What are your ideas for solving the guardianship crisis?

To address Alaska's guardianship crisis, I would advocate for partnerships with local organizations and universities to create a pipeline of trained professionals to expand programs and incentives to attract and certify qualified guardians.

4. The Department of Justice has found reasonable cause to believe that the State of Alaska violates the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by failing to provide community-based services to children with behavioral health disabilities, relying instead on segregated, out-of-state institutional settings - specifically, psychiatric hospitals and psychiatric residential treatment facilities. What is your vision to support in-state mental health services which support children with behavioral health disabilities and their families?

I believe that the most important role that the state plays in supporting in-state mental health services is ensuring that our healthcare spaces are receiving adequate funding. Through working collaboratively with my colleagues on the capital budget, I was able to secure \$3.7 million to build a pediatric inpatient behavioral health unit at the Fairbanks

Memorial Hospital. I will continue to support projects that help our community in this way, especially when it comes to our youth.

5. Children with disabilities who attend our state schools often need to have adjustments made to their schedules and/or the education services they received (accommodations) as well as modifications to the curriculum used to teach them to receive an equitable and appropriate education. What steps will you take to improve education for students with disabilities, including ensuring proper accommodations and modifications within the classroom, increasing parental involvement in the Individualized Education Program process, and raising awareness of the rights of students under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act?

As someone who was a teacher for over 22 years, there is no policy issue more important to me than ensuring our students are successful. For many of my students, school was the most stable and consistent part of their day. Every educator I worked with poured themselves into all their students and their classrooms. What became clear to me was that we could be doing a lot more for our students. I couldn't stand by and continue to watch class sizes grow, programs get cut, and good teachers leave. Which is why for the past two years I have been prioritizing funding our schools. We have to raise the BSA significantly which will in turn allow schools to administer IEP's properly and to implement proper accommodations and modifications within the classroom, hire more staff, and improve education for all students, including those with disabilities. The sad truth is school districts are being forced to cut corners everywhere because our state has not been adequately funding education including support for IDEA.