

For Your Review: The Candidates' Responses

With the pending elections for president, a contested senate seat, and numerous state legislative positions all up for grabs, it's important that we make informed decisions when casting our ballots. For it's summer newsletter, The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) requested responses from both Bush and Kerry to issues that impact people with disabilities nationwide. Key Coalition and the Arc have sponsored forums for candidates Knowles and Murkowski to share their views on issues related to disability. Taking a page from AAPD's book, we wanted to give you an opportunity to learn more about the priorities of candidates for the local legislative races. The following six questions were sent to more than 130 candidates for House and Senate seats statewide. The responses (or lack thereof) give us a glimpse at what we might expect from them if elected. The questions posed to the candidates were:

- 1) *What are your top three accomplishments on behalf of people with disabilities and older Alaskans in your career to date?***
- 2) *If you are elected/re-elected what will be your top three priorities during your first 100 days in office to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities living in Alaska?***
- 3) *Many families of older individuals or those with disabilities report that they feel they are one step away from crisis while they sit on a waitlist for Medicaid-funded services, often for five years or longer. What specific and concrete ideas do you have for addressing the need for Medicaid-***

4) *People with disabilities are the single largest group of un- and under-employed Alaskans in the state. How will you work to secure equality of opportunity and economic self-sufficiency for people with disabilities?*

5) *How will you work with families to ensure that an individual's right to choose where and how they will live, secure appropriate medical care from a provider of the individual's choosing, and have access to supports necessary to remain in one's own home are protected and enforced?*

6) *What will you do to dramatically increase the percentage of children with disabilities who either pass the exit exam or demonstrate competence through alternate assessment methods, graduate from high school, and go on to post-secondary education?*

Candidates names and contact information were taken from the Division of Elections primary candidate list as posted on the State's website. All were given equal access to resources about disability issues, opportunities to gather information, and follow up support in responding.

For the uninitiated, comprehending the complexity of disability issues can be challenging. Several were wise enough to admit that they knew little of the issues and would be willing to work with families to learn more. Review the responses carefully and use the information to help guide your voting decisions.

The following responses are organized by general area of the state, Senate candidates first, and House candidates following.

*Candidate responses are reported verbatim,
except for spelling and punctuation.*

Anchorage Candidates

District K - Baxter Bog

Bettye Davis
Incumbent

1) I worked as a nurse and social worker with mentally disabled Alaskans during my career with State of Alaska before my entry into politics. While in office I have fought to increase funding and, sadly, in the recent past, protect funding for senior and those with disabilities. I fought against the elimination of the Longevity Bonus. I introduced a bill to form a prescription drug task force that was not acted upon by my colleagues, so I convinced former Governor Knowles to establish one. One of the recommendations of that task force, a preferred drug list is now being implemented; hopefully some of the other valuable recommendations will also be implemented. I want to make clear that on the preferred drug list, I want it to control overall costs, but don't want to see it deprive Alaskans of specific medication that their physician feels is necessary. There needs to be a fair override provision for those drugs that a physician feels is medically necessary. I want the doctor, not the state to have the final say. When any disabled or older Alaskan, not just those in my district, approaches me for assistance with their issues, I advocate for them to the best of my ability.

2) I intend to introduce a bill that controls the use of Psychotropic drugs on children. I am presently involved in looking into the regulation changes to respite and assisted living. I plan to continue that and help introduce legislation to move these services forward in a positive manner and not backward as is occurring. I want to look more intensely at the true human impact of so-called "cost-containment" programs.

3) We are not the only state that has this problem. Some states are actually successful at this. I will look at those methods and other creative ways to try to relieve this shameful waitlist. I will be honest with you and other

advocate groups, it is not easy to do anything to improve the life of older Alaskans, disabled Alaskans or any Alaskan in need of services while those in leadership look at these services as budget numbers instead of people.

4) I am willing to introduce legislation to put in place incentives to employers who create training programs and more importantly hire individuals with disabilities. I also think we should highlight those employers who already hire Alaskans with disabilities. Let's publicize those who help our disabled Alaskans. Let's make it a source of pride and the right thing to do.

5) As I do now, I will work with anyone to protect those choices. If there are roadblocks to these services, I am willing to do what I can, professionally or legislatively to insure those end results. We all have a right to a life based on quality, not budget constraints.

6) I believe the recent lawsuit settlement addresses that. However, it is incumbent upon us all to insure that it works once it is implemented.

Ken Flynn – R
Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District M – Spenard

Paula Pawlowski - R
Challenger

1) Serving as the Alaska PTA president, 1997-99, with a membership of 15,000 living throughout Alaska, I initiated a cooperative partnership with P.A.R.E.N.T.S Inc when Faye Neityo was the executive director. We encouraged presenters at our annual conference and donated booth space. After my term, the Alaska PTA has continued supporting the organization with letters of support when federal applications were due and combining teleconferences to cross-pollinate boards and volunteers. I have presented and attended previous Pathways conferences and made information available to our membership. As a member of the State Board of Education & Early Development for the years 1998-2003, I have been dismayed to find services for children have not been met in rural areas have resulted in

families being separated or displaced to receive services. Serving on the National PTA Board of Managers I served on the Pilot Project with Easter Seals to encourage more daycare sites to include children with disabilities and how a building would look, inside and out (playground equipment etc.) and how to fund such ventures. My grandson attends the Easter Seal Tundra Tykes daycare in Anchorage. I am not sure I can point to any of the participation as 'accomplishments' so much as always trying to raise the 'awareness' of the challenges that families face when a child has a disability. I am a member of AARP. Also I recognize the challenges for non-profits to be ADA compliant. Being compliant is frequently not within their control (not owning a building) and is beyond their membership driven budgets.

2) I would like to examine the availability of services in our rural areas. I would like to expand transportation issues for individuals with disabilities and our seniors. I would like to examine and expand housing and nursing care for long-term disabilities. I would like to see additional funding for re-training for DVR (Division of Rehabilitation) and accessibility of training combined with job placement.

3) I am ready to address these issues and work with families that are facing these difficulties to seek specific ideas and solutions. Every family is within steps of financial difficulty with even a mild illness much less an emotional crisis in a major incident. As my husband retired from 26 years of active duty service we quickly realized that in this day you must have more than one insurance policy. Even the military cannot provide lifetime medical that we thought was going to happen 26 years ago as we began his career. I know about health care issues that are large group driven and under funded and under manned.

4) I do not have a 'plan' in place but do understand the need for retraining. In my work arena, I am a Training Coordinator for Northwest Technical Services, we have been providing computer skills training along with seminars to improve resumes, cover letters, interview skills and job placement. We are a state approved training center and work with VA clients and DVR clients. There is a huge gap between services and funding and job placement. This is a

serious issue for me and I would work to develop better access to skills based training and promoting accommodations in the work place for workers with special needs.

5) I would look at other states for 'good practices' to start with. I lived for ten years in Massachusetts where a dear friend had a CP baby that required 24-hour care. He was identified early, services were provided in home from birth to 3yrs then from 3yr to 5yrs by in-home visits from Children's services. She was allowed access to low interest building funds to add on additional space to accommodate the medical equipment and space for 24 hour nursing care, handicapped access to the home and substitute health aides for back up. She, as the primary parent, was trained in home care by the state to help offset the intensive care needs. Danny, participated in a public day care, lived to 9 years old and had a quality of life with his parents and siblings. The testimonies I have heard from Alaska families having to live separated to provide services for their child need to be heard. Training, funding and options need to be addressed.

6) I would like to start with the IEP process and make sure that parents understand the process and are a full partner in the decision making process. I want them to be able to advocate for their child to stay the course to pass the exit exam knowing that it may take longer than an ordinary four-year commitment. I want the paraprofessionals to meet the standards set by the state under the No Child Left Behind law. I want additional coaching accessibility for children with disabilities along with their parents and I want a committed team of adults gathered for the specific purpose to support the learning and success for the student. I want a student who meets the rigorous IEP, has a solid attendance record and has taken the Exit Exam as is or with the alternative assessment or accommodations to receive their High School Diploma and their scores placed on their transcript. I would support access to skills based training to build the skills at different stages of life to be able to continue to have an increased quality of life that would lead to better salaries.

Thank you for the opportunity to answer your survey. I do not have the answers but I do have the experience and have experienced

relationships where there is no doubt in the additional struggles that a family is dealing with on a daily basis. I want to live, work and stay in Alaska for many years to come to enjoy our children's successes and watch our grandchildren grow. As a state, we will be faced with how to provide care for a higher number of citizens who will not want to leave the state for services and nor should they. Planning ahead for our future will need to engage the citizens, ourselves, to make that a positive future.

Pawlowski reports that her views of the disability systems have been influenced by experiences her husband and a friend have had in the past few years.

Hollis French II - D

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

District O – South Anchorage

Lynda Zaugg – D

Challenger

I'm unable to answer this questionnaire because my background is not in this area. However, I do believe that persons with disabilities should have access to the services they need, when they need them. Like every Alaskan, those with disabilities should have access to good health care, education, jobs, and the opportunity to live independently. As I've been walking the district, I've met with many neighbors who have been adversely impacted by program cuts and cuts in the availability of Medicaid. These situations are very difficult and I believe we need to work together to find ways to provide these essential programs.

Edward Burke, Jr. – I

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

John Cowdery – R

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

Rosalie Nadeau – D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District R – Lake & Peninsula

Mike Milligan -D

Challenger

1) As a Kodiak Island Borough Assemblyman in 1993 I increased the funding for Special Olympics with an amendment I introduced to the non-profit budget for that year.

2) My three priorities would be:

- a. Work on making the High School exit more inclusive and less punitive so that it better reflects Alaskan values,
- b. Work to include "special needs pupil" funding in our public schools, and
- c. Defend assisted living facilities.

3) The National health care crisis can't be solved only in Alaska when so many of the specifics need to be addressed at the national level.

However the state can negotiate for generic drug benefits to a greater degree, and in effect stretch Medicaid dollars and make the program more inclusive.

4) With tax incentives on the corporate state income tax.

5) The legislature can support those choices by working to insure that the Dept. of Health and Social Services is assisting local communities in tailoring their grant writing for federal funds, and that those funds help to provide employment opportunities for Alaskans at the local level.

6) The entire methodology for the application of the Alaska High School Exit Exam is flawed. It supposes that we can punish our way to a better educational institution. American education has always been about second chances, it makes good economic sense and I feel that the whole Exit exam needs to be re-evaluated.

District R– Lake & Peninsula

Mike Yourkowski – D

Challenger

1) Top Three Accomplishments:

- a. I sponsored a mayoral proclamation making October Disability Awareness Month. I worked with Jim Brady of the American Association of People with Disabilities to increase awareness

and institute a mentoring program in the city of Homer. The proclamation served to educate the public and helped to establish a mentoring program between employers and individuals with disabilities.

b. I've worked diligently to ensure that Homer meets and exceeds ADA requirements for accessibility of public buildings and facilities.

c. I have also made a personal commitment to ensure that bathrooms and ramps on my own buildings provide access to individuals with special needs.

2) Top Three Priorities:

a. I want to restore funding to assisted living programs. These programs provided needed services to many residents of Alaska. Cutting funding for these programs is a shortsighted attempt to balance the budget on the backs of the most vulnerable.

b. I want to increase job opportunities for people living with disabilities. I find it deeply disturbing that only 32% of people with disabilities of working age are employed, compared to 81% of people without a disability. Institutional barriers must be broken down to allow individuals with disabilities the opportunity to work.

c. I want to ensure that mental health care receives the same attention that is currently paid to physical health. Furthermore, reasonable health insurance rates should be available to all people, especially those with special needs.

3) These services have been cut so drastically, little can be done except reverse these cuts. In our current fiscal climate, however, this is difficult. To help those in need of Medicaid funded services, we must first fix the fiscal problems so that more funds will be available for Medicaid funded services. I would accomplish this through targeted departmental cuts, increased taxes on cruise ships, and taxes on out-of-state employees. The key is putting people first.

4) Under/unemployed

a. Evaluate tax breaks for employers of disabled individuals.

b. Fund education programs to dispel myths about the contributions of disabled Americans and educate employers about the reliability and competency of disabled individuals.

c. Institute mentoring programs (like those in Homer) where employers are paired with

disabled individuals. Employers learn about the valuable contributions of disabled workers, while the new workers learn skills that allow them to fully integrate into the work place.

d. Technology is a great benefit in overcoming many disabilities. Funding for this technology should be a priority.

5) For individuals with disabilities to remain in their communities, they must be able to receive services locally. Community clinics and support organizations are the best way to maintain an individual's freedom to live where and how he or she chooses. Crisis intervention and management clinics work best when patients do not have to be moved out of their homes and communities and into distant institutions. Increasing the capacity and resources of local clinics should be a priority in the legislature.

6) The first step in helping disabled students is to increase our outreach programs. If students do not know about or are not involved in our programs, they cannot take advantage of the. Second, we need to integrate supportive technology into the classroom. Third, we must maintain or increase our current education funding levels. Finally, while special education is very important, we should never completely segregate our disabled students. Studies have shown that disabled students achieve more (socially and academically) when they are a part of the greater educational experience.

Gary Stevens – R

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

District 17 – Eagle River

Nicholas Begich – I

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Jay Dulany - R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Pete Kott – R

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

District 19 - Muldoon

Peggy Robinson - D
Challenger

1) I have a Master's Degree in Special Education and an Administrative Certificate. This last year I was the special education director for four school districts in rural Alaska, working on a contract with SERRC. Three mothers in Cold Bay called me at the beginning of the year, wanting to know what special education programming was going to be available for their middle school aged LD sons in the 15-student school that had two regular education teachers. With the research that I did and use of the Capacity Building Special Ed money for the Aleutians East Borough School District, the superintendent and I implemented the use of the FastForWord Program to develop new brain synapses in the boys, improving their phonemic awareness and increasing their reading ability by two to three grades during a 3-month period. The superintendent plans to expand the program to all the district schools and implement the beginning program for all kindergarteners. I shared the results with my three other districts, and strongly encouraged them to at least purchase the kindergarten program.

When I was on the Anchorage School Board, we mandated that all kindergarteners were to be screened using the Slingerland test, and that principals were to have a goal of having at least one Slingerland-trained first grade teacher, and ideally one in second grade also. Before that time, many students with LD were not being identified until third or fourth grade when they were very far behind. There was also a long waiting list to get into the screened Slingerland classes, frustrating many parents.

I worked at a private institution for the mentally retarded in central Missouri from 1976-1978. There were some very capable teens living there instead of group homes in the community, and attending school in the institution. I arranged for one student to attend the neighboring high school, another to move into a community group home, and a third to receive an electric wheelchair. From there, more parents began to move their children back to their home

communities and to more normal living situations.

2) I am very concerned about the budget cuts in the social service area that are greatly impacting children and people with disabilities. I want to do a budget revision that would restore the stipend paid to foster care parents, especially those providing therapeutic foster care. We need to restore to the prior funding level the Medicaid waiver program that provides respite and personal services care in the home. Restoring Denali KidCare eligibility to the prior level is a third item, since quality pre-natal care and regular well-baby checkups help prevent future disabilities.

3) There needs to be some reprioritizing of items within the state budget to provide services to those whom need them. I was in graduate school when the de-institutionalization movement was happening (working in the first group home in Eugene, Oregon). The state's promise was to fund, in the community, the services people needed instead of warehousing them in institutions. However, states cut their costs by closing or downsizing their institutions but did not pass all that funding onto community-based programs. The Legislature needs to work closely with the Mental Health Lands Trust and community advocacy groups to live up to the promise.

4) Adequately funding training programs and the needed support network is a priority. Offering incentives to employers to work with people with disabilities until they are able to meet minimum standards is important. Flexible schedules may be needed, which are also often desired by their non-disabled peers. A good cost comparison study of employed vs. non- or under-employed individuals would be helpful to make the case for higher investment in our human resources.

5) Effective education and advocacy groups have changed the face of schooling, living, and working for people with disabilities. And this includes advocacy groups for themselves, such as People First. Adequate funding lies at the heart of this question, and it is necessary for these groups to educate lawmakers about the important issues of personal choice. I learned much more on visits to schools and programs

when I was on the school board than on testimony during a board meeting. The same is true here. During the time between sessions, visits of Legislators to the variety of living, training, and working options and an opportunity to discuss the issues are very important.

6) As I indicated in my first answer, there are programs (more than one) available that can significantly increase the reading abilities and feeling of over-all competence of students with LD. Antidotal information from the Anchorage School District teachers using the program are that the students are much more confident of themselves, read more recreationally, and improve their grades in other classes. Most of the students with disabilities who are not passing the exit exam are those certified in the LD category. So, I would use the science and technology that is available to help these students learn.

I was the Vocational Special Needs Coordinator for the Columbia, Missouri School District from 1979-82. We operated a vocational evaluation laboratory with a certified vocational evaluator to assess both disabled and low achieving students' interests and capabilities, providing vital information to their special education teachers and the school counselors. The Career Center also provided support services especially for the students needing them, as well as developing some special courses that would lead to entry-level jobs directly after high school. These courses helped the students apply their academic learning to actual job skills.

I believe that high school counseling needs to be improved, especially for students who are not college-bound. Many students would greatly benefit from training for specific occupations, but are not provided the assessment, information, or encouragement to pursue a vocational post-secondary program. The trade unions are very concerned about the "graying" of their workforce. Work-force development groups are talking about the issue – the state needs to help convene the training and discussion between the high school counselors/parents/students and the various unions and training programs.

Tom Anderson – R

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

Louis Mayo – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 20 - Mt. View/Wonder Park

Max Gruenberg, Jr. – D

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

William Moffatt – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 22 - Midtown

Sharon Cissna – D

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

Mike Ryan - R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 23 - Downtown

Rejena Cogland - D

Challenger

1) My top three accomplishments on behalf of people with disabilities has been my overwhelming acceptance of the culture in which PWDs inhabit. In other words, to be specific, I worked for a disability and wheelchair lifestyle magazine for four years in Malibu, CA. I spent many months surrounded by PWDs who had a variety of problems. I encourage integration, I tolerate differences, and I support independent living. My four years were spent serving the disability community in many different aspects including the administrative assistant to the publisher of *New Mobility* magazine and as the community liaison. I almost feel like this question was written for me!

2) My top three priorities will be to visit group homes, the independent living centers, and to visit with community activist groups such as the ARC, Salvation Army, and Special Olympics. I hope to accrue a real picture of what the exact situation is for PWDs living in Alaska. And my own disability, as a paraplegic will serve me well

in my first 100 days I will be able to reach my 3 goals of assessing PWDs situation which are: finding the real story behind all the stories, visiting all the places people are “instituted” to live under the states’ dollar, and visiting activists who will tell me what needs to be done, including writing legislation.

3) Most PWDs can work with the help of vocational rehabilitation. Medicaid funded services are a right not a privilege. There’s nothing sophisticated about being under Medicaid funded programs unless you are savvy enough to jump through all the hoops to find the money and talk to all the right people. I believe I can help PWDs move-up on waitlists if they are truly in trouble. I plan to expand services that Medicaid and SSDI offer while in office, so if I win I would be a good person to talk to about needing more assistance. Transportation is the key to getting around and we would need to be able to schedule rides and appointments around the new services.

4) The state needs to keep group homes a safe and special place to live. Getting a job while having a disability, though not necessary given the disability, people should do something productive with their time. Whether it is spending time on disability message board to promote equal opportunity or actually getting a job as a phone operator, vocational rehabilitation is an excellent place to build a productive working relationship with a counselor who can see that all their needs are being provided for, including education.

5) To ensure that severely handicapper’s rights to choose where and how they live is entirely up to the guardian. If a person, severely or even liberally disabled’s right to “quality of life” is transposed on then that right does belong to the court system. I recommend they call the Disability Law Center and/or have a public defender appointed to them. Unfortunately, this does put the person still at risk for abusive situations as the court system does not always meet time demands. Appropriate medical care is not always cost effective as George Stephanopolus has proclaimed recently in *Mouth Magazine* which means a person with a handicap needs an advocate that is on their side and with the best interests of the individual’s rights to liberty and freedom to choose. If they aren’t able

to choose than again PWDs face the same problem I do, which is healthcare for the unemployed is less than standard. Prescription drug benefits aren’t even where they should be in today’s economical climate. Politicians today work for the people who pay their campaign expenditures which are pretty high considering most politicians face the fact they do have to advertise in a mainstream fashion.

6) Fortunately the state has passed rules PWDs who need extra time to pass high school exit exams recently passed therefore more PWDs will be able to work at jobs that are for high school graduates. I will not remove vocational rehabilitation from the state, or any state, nor independent living centers. Unfortunately, if these facilities do not meet the demands of a PWD, they need to indicate what is right for them; this will probably be the last resort for them unless again they can employ good word-of-mouth and good advocates to parlay institution. As far as I am aware group homes and assisted living homes are not always the safest but they can be a good ground for socializing PWDs into a more mainstream culture. The group homes and assisted living centers offer services that a person living in their own home cannot see completely. Vocational rehabilitation is going to be the best bet to obtaining post-secondary education and many counselors will work to put a PWD into the best situation possible. Personally, from my point-of-view I see removing funding as a liability to what this country stands for – equally opportunity and equal rights. As a politician I can’t infringe upon those god-given rights in our country, nor would I want too. The more people who speak out and advocate for themselves or are a fair advocate for their loved one, client, guardian too can stand a chance at enjoying the many things Alaska has to offer in the way of education, recreational therapy, and entertainment in general. Work or an education may not always be the answer but living free from abuse, unsafe conditions and hazing should be enforced and I will strive to do this without educating, patronizing, condescension, or preaching what should be your choice of freedom. As long as you are safe, happy, and feeling well rested I think we can offer a pretty good way of living cost-free to the individual.

Les Gara - D

Incumbent

1) Right now the political climate is a hostile one to people with needs, whether they are seniors, people with disabilities, or people with alcoholism or mental health problems. I believe in a society where people, and government, extends a helping hand to those in need. Between the Governor's elimination of the Longevity Bonus, to his proposed Medicaid cuts for people with disabilities and health problems (cuts to respite and personal home care), the necessary safety net that should bind us as a community has been frayed. I've opposed his Longevity Bonus cut, his respite and home care cuts in the Medicaid program, and his cuts to the assisted living program under Medicaid. I don't think state government has accomplished much to be proud on the disability rights front in the past 2 years.

The failure to fund a decent Medicaid budget is in part why I voted against it this year.

I will do what I can to reinstate needed respite care, personal home care and other services needed by people with disabilities. People deserve opportunity in life, and to be treated with honor. I will need colleagues in the Legislature and the Governor's office who are willing to help, though. There are too few such colleagues right now.

I did help stop the Department of Health and Social Services from passing a bill that would have allowed people with mental disabilities, who are treated in community hospitals near their homes outside of Anchorage, to be transferred to API in Anchorage. The Governor pushed a bill to allow that to happen whenever the Department had a funding shortfall. I believe mental health care needs to be done near a person's family, and API is not a proper treatment facility when better options exist near a person's home.

2) I will work with others to try and reinstate the above Medicaid cuts on respite and home care, and try to reverse the cuts that make it more difficult for people with medical difficulties to find residences at assisted living centers.

3) I think the services need to be funded. There's no way around that, and declining needed services to people with disabilities should not be an option.

4) People with disabilities need assistance to help them live as independently as possible. That's a matter of helping all people live with dignity. The more we can achieve this goal, the more likely it will be that a person can overcome a disability and find employment. I also think we need to provide strong educational and job training opportunities for people with and without disabilities.

5) I will support the measures I mention above, and will listen to ideas from those who live with disabilities.

6) I think the exit exam is problematic, and would support an alternative system to let children show they deserve to graduate. The exit exam is too inflexible a tool to be used to determine who gets a diploma. Last year I filed a bill to allow a student who passed their coursework to graduate without passing the exit exam. The bill would have given people who passed their coursework and the exit exam a diploma showing they did both, but would not have denied a diploma to those who simply passed their coursework. That is, the bill would have allowed for a graduated diploma with a special designation for those who passed the exit exam.

Robert Goodman – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 24 – Midtown

Berta Gardner - D

Challenger

This candidate chose to respond indirectly to the questions, as follows.

Thank you very much for sending the survey to me. I think it is a very detailed and difficult survey because it presupposes a full understanding of complex questions relating to issues and solutions. Frankly, I'm unable at this time to answer most of your questions. Instead, I'd like to offer you this statement for

consideration:

As a parent, a citizen, a community volunteer and a new candidate for state office, I have a long history of activism in Anchorage. Most relevant for the purposes of Partners in Policymakers Project is my work with schools, with the CASA volunteer program and as a state contract advocate for children in state custody.

I have advocated for families and children, many of whom were disabled in a variety of ways. I have worked (too often with frustrating results) to help families and children get services they need and access to treatment, support programs and to housing and educational opportunities.

While I have no specific solutions at this time to the problems described in your survey, I am very much aware of and sympathetic to the needs of children, families, elderly and disabled members of our community. I am eager to hear suggestions and proposals for addressing them. I invite interested folks to give me a call at 223-9330.

I'm Berta, and I'm listening!

Andree McLeod – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

House District 26 - Spenard

Ethan Berkowitz - D

Incumbent

This candidate chose to respond indirectly to the questions, as follows.

Thank you for your questions. I am proud of my record standing up for disabled and senior Alaskans. I have answered in a more narrative form, somewhat out of order. Please forgive the latitude.

Alaskans deserve a legislature that reflects the values of all Alaskans and that enacts a budget which upholds the responsibilities of a humane and decent society.

This means, among others, eliminating the wait list, continuing the longevity bonus, reinstating

renter's rebate (akin to the property tax exemption), and repealing regulations affecting assisted living and respite efforts.

We must defend the services that protect the dignity and well being of disabled and senior Alaskans. Advances against the waitlists are particularly important. Waitlists suffered in the twilight of life strike me as particularly cruel, dangling hope just out of reach for too many people.

Elimination of job training efforts and workforce opportunity enforcement is counterproductive in a society that prides itself on self-sufficiency and a solid work ethic. Similarly, we have come too far and fought too hard for medical choice and home living. Still, creeping reinstitutionalization and mandated care has reemerged as a threat. Decisions of this nature should be made with the interests of the people first – not just the bottom line.

Standardized testing might work well for standardized people. Fortunately, we are all unique, possessing different abilities and different needs. Consequently, we must require standardized tests to accommodate alternate assessment methods. That is just a question of basic fairness.

Leonard Karpinski – L

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Steve Strait – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 27 – Sand Lake

Robert Buch – D

Challenger

1) I had some experience with a few people with disabilities while teaching hunter education for the State of Alaska dept. of fish and game. I tried to show where access to recreational facilities were available to those handicapped interested in the out doors.

2) I hope to examine our economic situation, set up a budget structure that benefits Alaskans,

thereby helping to benefit all residents of this state.

3) Currently, I am not familiar with the processes in appropriating funding regarding this issue. I don't feel qualified to speak to this problem.

4) I feel that this state has enough open-minded people to help make improvements in opportunities for those wanting to be components of a contributing society.

5) As medical insurance and the issues regarding coverage are one of the most important problems we all currently face, I strongly believe that priority must be given to addressing this epidemic dilemma. I do not know about current protection or enforcement, therefore with your help, I could use the appropriate information.

6) If I'm elected, I don't know how I would "dramatically" increase the graduating percentages. I would hope to help influence the number of disabled children who get the kind of help they need, but remain realistic in the realm of my elected abilities until such time as they are proven.

Buch has a relative with Down Syndrome.

Norman Rokeberg – R

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

District 28 – South Anchorage

Lesil McGuire - R

Incumbent

1) I have consistently supported full funding for programs to support these individuals. In addition, I joined with other members of the Majority caucus to request a special session following the 2003 session to ask the Governor to reconsider his decision to eliminate the Longevity Bonus. Lastly, I have worked with the Administration and other members of the Legislature to secure necessary funding for shortfalls in Medicaid funding to care for these Alaskans. Most recently, I have championed the quality of life in Alaska's assisted living homes. For the past month, I have spent a great deal of my time trying to help address concerns

expressed by these homes as a result of changes in state regulations.

2) I will continue to advocate for full funding for services for these Alaskans. Further, I will use my position and seniority in the Majority caucus to ensure that these people remain high in funding priority. Also, I will remain open to suggestions by advocates of these individuals to amend Alaska law in ways that are helpful to their advancement. Beyond my general advocacy, I will do the following:

- a. I will continue to work with assisted living homes to resolve any lingering issues as a result of state regulations;
- b. I want to carefully review transportation and infrastructure issues to enable disabled Alaskans to have a better quality of life; and
- c. I would like to help expand rehabilitative and job development services for our elderly and disabled.

3) While many states face similar problems, this is yet another symptom of our failure to solve the fiscal gap. I believe older and disabled Alaskans are able to contribute significantly to Alaska. I will continue to support programs that support these people and their families. However, none of these problems will be permanently addressed until we can solve our fiscal gap. My specific and concrete idea is that we must solve our fiscal gap with a reasonable, and well-balanced, approach.

4) I don't have a simple answer to this question. Similar to my previous answer, I look to the input of others to advise me on how best to solve these problems. I am deeply concerned about providing quality employment opportunities for ALL Alaskans, and I am particularly sensitive to disabled Alaskans. Because my brother is disabled as a result of a traumatic brain injury, I have first-hand knowledge of what these individuals face and always seek the opportunity to be part of the solution to this problem.

5) Again, this is an extremely complicated question, with many facets. First, regardless of where I find myself as a result of the Majority organization following the election, I will seek to remain on the Judiciary Committee in order to keep Alaska law current with changes to protect these individuals. Beyond the very immediate question of how best to solidify Alaska's

finances in the long term, is the question of how best to amend Alaska law to guarantee these protections. Without question, it is imperative that we attract new insurance companies to our state to offer a broader standard of coverage, and I am committed to this. Again, I look to experts in the field to offer suggestions on how best to accomplish this task.

6) First, let me say that I whole-heartedly agree with the policy objectives of the “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) Act. However, representing some of the highest performing schools in the Anchorage School District (ASD), I am concerned about the impact of the act both on my schools and the special needs students in those schools. I have no problem with holding our students to a high standard, but to a standard that is mindful of legitimate disabilities. I will work to ensure that all Alaska students have a variety of testing methods that give a fair and accurate assessment of their academic ability. If Alaska is to grow and progress, it is essential that all our residents have a fair and equal opportunity for quality education, be it secondary or post-secondary.

Cody Downs – D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 29 - Campbell/Independence Park

Ralph Samuels – R

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

Chris Tuck – D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 30 – Bicentennial Park

Kevin Meyer - R

Incumbent

- 1a) Helped restore funding to Independent Living when the governor had proposed to cut.
- b. When I was on the Anchorage Assembly was a advocate for the muni-lift to increase services and reduced the rates to ride.
- c. Have been able to obtain more money through capital grants for various groups such as the Ind .

Blind, and for the seniors through the Sr. Care Program.

2a) Improve the Voc Rehab program so more people with disabilities can get a job.

b. Assure adequate funding for the Independent Living programs.

c. Look into ways to improve independent living, assisted living and the pioneer homes for our seniors.

3) We need to improve our fiscal climate so that people who qualify can receive adequate payments quickly.

4) Dept. Labor has programs to assist people with disabilities. However they are not measured by their success. Their funding needs to be tied to their success in helping people find jobs.

5) We need to do a better job of coordinating our activities with our federal representatives. We need to make sure they will continue to match what we are doing in the State.

6) We as legislators need to encourage them to do so. I often meet with kids with disabilities through the Key campaign, and always encourage them to reach for the stars. Hopefully our schools are doing the same.

Rachel Higgins – D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 31 – lower Hillside

Laddie Shaw – R

Challenger

1) I have an under graduate degree in Recreation Administration with an emphasis in Therapeutic Recreation and worked closely with disabled athletes.

As the state director for Veterans Affairs I worked closely with both the disabled veterans and homeless veterans programs.

I worked closely with the Federal Veterans Affairs office in Alaska in promoting the World Veterans Wheelchair games coming to Alaska.

I worked on behalf of veterans’ legislation

acknowledging service to our WWII and Korean veterans and designating the Pioneers Home as the Pioneers and Veterans Home. As the state veterans representative I was the conduit to the disabled veterans community to help them in compensation claims.

2) Review accessibility issues.
Equitability opportunity for employment.
Equitable funding for people with disabilities.

3) Considering that the Federal aid dollars are managed by the state I would first say there needs to be a better accounting of the dollars, in that those dollars may be poorly managed. Why have personal care attendant costs gone from \$12 million to \$70 million and there is still a waiting list for that specific care?

My concern is accountability and responsibility to efficient services being provided.

4) I will work to provide equitable funding and legislation securing equality of opportunity in the workplace.

5) I will work to ensure that opportunities and freedoms of the disabled are balanced and equitable against those of the general public. I will work with the appropriate social service agency, if needed, to support access to medical provider's and housing assistance.

6) Fund the mandate and support remedial training as needed. Allow for alternative assessments on a case-by-case and disability level basis.

Bob Lynn – R

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

James Peterson – D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Kirk Wickersham – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Mat-Su Candidates

District G - Palmer

Lyda Green-R

Incumbent

- 1) People with Disabilities:
- Funding for a fully functioning Mental Health Court in Palmer
 - Served on Governor's Council for Handicapped and Gifted (now the Council for Disabilities and Special Education) for the four years prior to entering the Legislature where I have served for the past ten years.

Older Alaskans:

- Advocated on behalf of senior interests in the Palmer Pioneers and Veterans Home Bill
- Obtained funding for Senior Living Facilities
- Supported Assisted Living funding and Reform

2. a. Re-write of the Exit Exam – I have introduced legislation in order to address the needs of the learning disabled on the High School Exit Exam. Specifically, I believe the learning disabled should be given an Individualized Assessment based on their Individual Education Plan.
- I will continue to hold government agencies accountable for providing services quickly and efficiently
 - I will continue to chair the Key Campaign meetings in Juneau.

3) During my Legislative career I have fought for and achieved legislation making Medicaid Fraud a crime. If less money is siphoned out by false claims, more money is available for those truly in need.

4) The High School Exit Exam changes I am fighting for will allow more students with disabilities to secure a high school diploma which will open up further education and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

5) I support the obligation that everyone has to work together as a team to reach these solutions. Government can never supply everything that an individual may want but government can assist the individual in getting the services they need, I

am willing to listen and work with individual, family members, nonprofits and government agencies to make sure that everything that can be done is being done.

6) I sponsored legislation this year to provide for an individual assessment for students on an Individual Education Plan (IEP). I have consistently worked for alternate assessment methods and will continue to do so.

James Dellasilva – D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Virginia King-Taylor - D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 13 - Palmer

Mike Chmielewski - D

Challenger

1) Developing methods for using adaptive devices with teachers in Mat-Su schools who work with special needs students.

Designing computer data systems to more efficiently handle paperwork associated with services for people with disabilities.

Bringing my dad (who is 91) into our home and working with a variety of service agencies to handle his increasing needs over the past 8 years.

2) Review access to the Legislature : physical building access, internet access and other mail and phone systems.

Make improvements.

Review and prioritize the needs identified by organizations that support improvement in the quality of life for people with disabilities living in Alaska.

3) Having dealt with the variety of channels available for support, I understand the need for easy- to-find, comprehensive help in working through the system. I also am aware that crisis needs are often difficult to present in a way that gets the system to respond. I believe that a comprehensive review and updating of policies

is in order with service to individuals being the highest priority, rather than adherence to procedure.

4) Start by ensuring that information about the needs and numbers is clearly available. My sense is that visibility of need leads to action. Also, every bill should be reviewed to determine its effect on employment and quality of life of people with disabilities.

5) Working with families requires good communication. I will invite families to identify examples of greatest need for improved protection of rights.

It makes good sense to provide support for individuals to choose to remain at home or to make use of well-supported out-of-home settings.

6) This has been an ongoing area of concern for everyone. Legislative intent has not always been reflected in regulations developed by the State School Board and DEED. I support the development of both modified testing procedures and alternative testing methods. I also support the revision of NCLB to more accurately reflect the diversity in Alaska schools.

James Garhart – I

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Carl Gatto – R

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

James Milne – D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 14 – Wasilla

Vic Kohring – R

Incumbent

1a) Voting in favor of the state-operating budget that provides funding for programs benefiting the disabled.

b. Helping to successfully block efforts to put in place new taxes that would make it more difficult for people to pay for expenses associated with disabilities.

c. Same as letter 'b' above, as it relates to blocking efforts to spend a portion of the Permanent Fund on government.

2) My top three priorities will remain the same as noted in question #1.

3) I would support additional finding for low-income elderly so they obtain sufficient Medicaid funding. I would seek funding to pay for the increases by reducing spending in other areas of the state-operating budget (i.e. merge/consolidate departments and agencies to reduce overhead costs).

4) Promote legislation that provides tax credits to businesses as an incentive to employ the disabled.

5) My answer to question #4 applies here as well.

6) Support adequate funding in out schools to accomplish this objective.

Pat Carney – D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Colleen Sullivan-Leonard – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 16 - Chugiak/Southern Mat-Su

John Angell – D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Bill Stoltze – R

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

Southeast, Fairbanks, Interior and Rural/Remote Communities

District A Baranof

David Landis – D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Bert Stedman – R

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

District C – Interior and Prince William Sound

Robert “Moose” Henrichs - D

Challenger

This candidate chose to respond indirectly to the questions, as follows.

What Does MOOSE Protect and Support?

Protect the Permanent Fund Dividend. The State must demonstrate efficient service delivery and leave the PFD in the hands of Alaskans.

Support Education in Alaska. Our young people of all ability levels deserve access to quality education in their hometowns.

Support Health Care in Rural Alaska. Alaskans deserve quality health care in our own communities.

Protect Our Right to Hold and Bear Arms.

MOOSE is pro-gun.

Support our Elders. Reinstate programs so our seniors can afford to stay in Alaska.

Support a Rural Economy. We need to elect a strong individual who will stand up for rural Alaskans. We all know that Alaska is a great place to live and raise a family. Our rural communities have a right to exist and I need your help to make sure that we survive and prosper.

What Does MOOSE Do?

He presides, chairs, and directs many organizations that represent Alaskans.

President Native Village of Eyak Chairman
Chugach, Alaska Corporation Chairman, Alaska Inter-Tribal Council

Director, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium,

Director Chugachmiut,

Director Gulf of Alaska Coastal Community Coalition,

Director North Pacific Rim Housing Authority

Albert Kookesh – D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Carl Morgan, Jr. – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District E - Fairbanks

Rita Allee – D

Challenger

- 1a) Hire economically disadvantaged, disabled and older employees in my business.
 - b. Made handicap accessible my business.
 - c. Represented economically disadvantaged, disabled and elderly individuals at no cost
-
- 2a) Promote recruitment and training of the disabled for state employment.
 - b. Promote handicapped accessible state facilities and services starting with my Senate offices. It is my intention to maintain a handicapped accessible office in Fairbanks.
 - c. Join with colleagues interested in a comprehensive over view of health care in Alaska.
-
- 3) Solving the health care dilemma is the single most important step for small business and organized labor, as well as the disabled and their families. We are paying for first class care for everyone? Why do we get so little? In a concrete way, this question is too limited. The scope of the issue is much greater than a “need based category” approach. As long as we look at this as a narrow question for certain needs-based recipients, we will never really address the issue. The question is “How can all Alaskans have health insurance?”
-
- 4) Relentless recruitment and training, the state must model for private enterprise what can be done.
-
- 5) The present system is somewhat inflexible as often little choice exists between full guardian/ conservator ship and reliance unpaid, untrained and ill-informed friends and family. We need to provide assistance to supportive friends and family acting as care givers as an alternative to the public guardian assuming full control.
-
- 6) Fairbanks schools are a top priority. We have experts on the job now. They are professional

educators and teachers. We need to pay them and give them the tools to do their job. Recruitment and training of disabled teachers would provide the role models necessary to put disabled students forward.

Hope CermelJ – I

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Gary Wilken - R

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

District I - Peters Creek

K. Scott Daugharty – D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Fred Dyson – R

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

Tom Staudenmaier – I

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District Q – Salamatof

Scott Hamann – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Thomas Wagoner – R

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

Jerry Ward – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 1 – Southeast Alaska

James Elkins – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Dawn Allen-Herron – D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

John Shay

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 2 - Sitka

Peggy Wilson – R
Incumbent

1) Increased funding for education. Worked to align state law of Sp Ed to conform with Federal Law. Worked to protect rights of aging. As chairman of H.E.S.S. worked hard to ensure many programs were continued and funding would also. Mental Health ties in with many of the Sp Ed and DD to low income individuals and families. I also worked to keep mental health drugs available for those who needed them.

2a) Get the word out on prescription help
b. More funding for schools so they can increase Special Education and Disabilities Programs.

3) Fix the states fiscal problems so we have more funds for people with disabilities and older Alaskans. We need to stabilize the states stream of revenue and of course increase it in order to provide the services that are needed.

4) Put into place incentives for employers to hire the disabled.

5) Make sure federal rules are enforced. Keep out HMO's

6) Increase funding for education!

Roxanne Houston – D
Challenger
This candidate did not respond.

District 3 – Douglas, Snettisham, Downtown Juneau...

Andrew Engstrom – R
Challenger
This candidate did not respond.

Beth Kerttula – D
Incumbent
This candidate did not respond.

District 4 – Douglas, Shelter Island...

Bruce Weyhrauch – R
Incumbent

1) First, as chairman of the House State Affairs Committee, I stopped governor's bills that potentially harmed those with disabilities and older Alaskans, and had hearings on bills where those issues were addressed; I tried to be a voice for those who advocate for seniors and the disabled, and those affected by issues accompanying senior citizenship and disabled. I met regularly with key campaign participants. On one issue in particular, last summer Catholic Community Services was denied a grant by the Commission on Aging. In the process of digging up how the ACOA denied the grant, we came upon the fact that ACOA gave OPA a huge grant of cash notwithstanding intent language in the supplemental budget bill that the OPA might need adjustment. My office raised this with H&SS Commissioner Joel Gilbertson and asked why the Senior Info Office got cut, while during the same grant process OPA got a larger appropriation. We pointed out that the legislature's intent language indicates that the Legislature didn't want OPA to get additional funds given the other cuts to senior programs that were made. Immediately following, the Commissioner indicated to CCC that the department would find the Senior Info Office money to continue and it continues to this day.

2) Aggressively look for budget solutions to provide a recurring source of revenues for the long term stability of the state; build gas pipeline; insure that section 638 pilot program will get waivers paid by the federal government and not the state, and then make sure savings go back to the program.

3) We have a budget surplus now, so we need to insure that those funds replace essential services cut during the deficit years. Also, we should attempt to have native groups and the federal government take over the burden on the states to insure that the state has resources to serve the state's most vulnerable population. Also, I would try to help reinstitute self-directed services that other states have.

4) Support the programs and work of the Department of vocational rehabilitation. I support the focus on this and other agencies with getting involved sooner, getting individuals motivated and using voc rehab services earlier.

5) Look at self directed services as an option for Alaska. Insure that funds for home health care assistance programs continues.

6) Hold teachers, not kids, accountable to the maximum extent possible; allowing reasonable accommodations for testing, and allow passage if it can be demonstrated through other assessment methods. Also, this may point out the need for a voc rehabilitation alternative from high school.

Bob Doll – D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 5 – Panhandle

Kathy Leary – D

Challenger

This candidate chose to respond indirectly to the questions, as follows.

Thank you for sending me your survey. I do not pretend to know the answers to these many and complex issues surrounding disability issues in Alaska. However, many years ago I did work for the Divisions of Family and Youth Services, Public Assistance and Medical Assistance, so I am familiar with many of the processes and the quagmire of red tape that is so frustrating to your constituents. Currently, I am a 9-year school board member and a little more familiar with special education laws and policies, as I have explained below. I hope to be elected to this house seat and look forward to working with your organization on these very important issues.

1) As a member of the Association of Alaska School Boards and one of their Board of Directors:

a. I facilitated the resolutions process were we:

Adopted a resolution urging the legislature to reconsider the funding level for children with intensive needs since the current funding

mechanism provides an inadequate level of support.

Advocated that bilingual and vocational education be funded separately based on need rather than be block funded with special education.

Our Board of Directors will suggest to our membership that this special education resolution be included as part the entire Education Funding Formula Re-write resolution so it will have more teeth and contain more core issues.

Adopted a resolution advocating to resolve many issues surrounding IDEA as it is reauthorized. AASB joins with NSBA in urging Congress to fairly and fully fund this federal mandate. In 1975 the federal government committed to pay 40% of these costs. Currently only 16 % of the necessary funding is received. The remainder comes directly from local school districts.

b. Fully supported SB289 reauthorizing SESA to legislators at the AASB legislative fly-in. (where I facilitated small school district forums on education legislation)

c. As president for Chatham School District board, advocated for and obtained funding for a wheel chair access ramp for Angoon Elementary School and gym access.

d. Helped coordinate jobs placement and payroll for programs for economically disadvantaged Older Americans, Displaced Homemakers, and Neighborhood Youth Corps.

This information would answer 2, 3 &5:

a. Get the appropriate divisions at DHSS to find ways to streamline the process for home and community based waivers.

b. Look at the Medicaid list of mandatory covered services and optional services. Ask them to re-evaluate their priorities of optional services related to these issues as part of the state's Medicaid State Plan.

c. Get more up to speed on the issues surrounding the needs of Alaskans with disabilities and older Alaskans such as becoming involved with Partners in Policy Making.

d. Create incentives for partnerships between schools and local support agencies so that a larger pool of capable providers can be educated and then employed in their communities thus allowing disabled individuals to remain in their homes and communities.

e. Insist on alignment of regulations with statutes.

f. Encourage interagency agreements between Health Care providers where services are not available at one facility but would be available at another. This would provide for less red tape and more cooperation to allow for choice of providers.

4) Work at state and federal levels to provide incentives to employers who hire individuals with disabilities. This could come in the form of reduced business license fees, tax breaks, employer contribution rates, etc.

6) The State Board of Education has put out proposed regulations for public comment on statewide assessments for students with disabilities. The board will review this with oral testimony being accepted at the mid-August meeting. Without knowing the outcome of the new regulations at this time, it would be difficult to answer this question. However, I would think that once special accommodations have been made and alternative assessments have been developed that the percentage of these children who will graduate should dramatically increase and if they so choose, be able to go on to post-secondary education. I would like to see the UA scholars program provide a certain number of scholarships to students with IEP's who might not otherwise qualify for the program.

Tim June – D
Challenger

As a longtime cancer survivor and one who has lost part of a lung, I understand some of the difficulties the disabilities bring in one's life. I have work diligently in Alaska on statewide policy that will protect other Alaskans from cancer. I have personally guided a number of cancer patients through their difficult treatment decisions. My own town of Haines has the highest per capita senior population in the State

and I have always promoted the value of seniors' to a local communities. I am not familiar with specific State programs, however, I am ready to be educated.

2a) Meet with advocates for Alaskans with disabilities and representatives of the UAA Center for Human Development to develop a legislative addenda and action plan.

b. Instruct my staff to write a position paper on issues confronting Alaskan's with disabilities and older Alaskans and seek support from other legislators.

c. Support full funding for the Denali Project and mandatory screening of infants for possible disabilities.

3) Require full disclosure of waiting list criteria to be made public with a ranking of position/priority for those on the list to be available to the public. Meet with State and Federal department heads administering this program to develop a fair and open system with the goal of reducing the administrative burden on the public and streamlining the process. Persons with special needs should not have to wait years for a determination of eligibility. Persons with special needs should not have to wait years for a determination of eligibility. I will search for new revenue to help pay for programs by reviewing our current oil tax structure to make sure Alaska is getting its fair share of our oil wealth.

4) I will request recommendations for methods to improve employment opportunities for Alaskans with disabilities. Request the appropriate State Department to notify all employers of tax incentives and credits available for those who employ persons with disabilities. Provide a direct source for Alaskans with disabilities to report discrimination in employment and encourage enforcement (i.e. 800 number posted in work places). Work to ensure that every high school graduate has a marketable skill and a good education.

5) It is important that those with disabilities have the benefit of strong family support if available and desirable. I will direct my staff to dedicate time for this issue. I will inform my constituents that they have the right to choose where and how they live and to secure appropriate medical care from a provider of their choice and to make available to them such information together with

State and Federal resources (i.e. educational flyer, internet resources web site). I will assist constituents in securing enforcement by notify the appropriate agency as needed.

6) I strongly oppose the “No Child Left Behind” program, benchmark testing, and the graduation requirement. All of these programs are unfunded mandates that divert critical funds away from our classrooms and students. Teachers are trained professionals and are in the best position to judge the abilities and needs of our children. The graduation test specifically discriminated against the disabled and is culturally biased. I will encourage post secondary education for Alaska children with disabilities by investigating scholarships and grants dedicated to their needs and encourage Alaska educational institutions to make allowances to accommodate such students.

Gary Graham – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

W. Doug Rhodes – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Dewey Skan – D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Kimberley Strong – D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

William Thomas, Jr. – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 6 – Tonsina, Tok, Tyonek...

Jason Mayrand - R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

George Owletuck - R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Woodie Salmon - D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Ward Sattler - R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 7 – Chatanika

Kathy Dietrich - D

Challenger

1) I am a newcomer to politics. However, as a Business Agent for ASEA/AFSCME Local 52 I was involved in advocating for hundreds of employees, including those with disabilities. I was responsible for advising employees of their rights under the contract, the ADA and the FNLA and enforcing those rights. I worked with various organizations such as EEOC, the HRC and Access Alaska to solve issues in the workplace.

2a) Under Governor Murkowski, the state has accomplished a sweeping reorganization of the Department of Health and Social Services over the past 2 years. How this reorganization affected the delivery and availability of services to the disabled community is still not entirely clear as the results are just now coming in and have not yet been comprehensively analyzed. As a legislator in Juneau I would work to ensure a full review of the successes and shortcomings of the reorganization of the Department of Health and Social Services.

b. As a candidate, I am already reaching out to the disabled population and disability service providers and advocates to learn about the challenges that disabled Alaskans face and their solutions. This is an ongoing process for me and once elected I will reach out to disability service providers such as Fairbanks Resource Agency, Access Alaska, the Disability Law Center, and the Fairbanks Community Mental Health Center, and others to help me identify the priorities of the disability community in Fairbanks and how they can be addressed within the State government. I would need more information on the challenges facing disabled Alaskans before I could list any additional priorities.

3) In light of the state’s current fiscal climate of no increased spending on services, I am not sure what can be done to address the need for shrinking the number of individuals waiting for Medicaid funded services other than looking

hard at any and all forms of alternative service provision that are less costly while providing for a similar level of service and more independence for disabled Alaskans. An example of this would be the home community-based waivers program that allows disabled Alaskans to stay in their own homes instead of moving to nursing homes or other institutional settings. Allowing disabled Alaskans to continue to live in their own homes is cheaper than institutional care and allows participants to stay in their communities, yet there is a cap on funding for this program in the current budget. It seems to me that expanding programs like this would maximize the service provision available under current government Medicaid funding.

4) The unemployment rate for disabled Alaskans is around 70%. This is a shocking waste of our valuable human resources. Some of the challenges that must be addressed before this rate comes down include:

- a. Disincentives for working. We need to find a way for disabled Alaskans to earn an income without having to fear they will lose their health care benefits under Medicaid because of it.
- b. Lack of skills required for the job. Our education system needs to find a way to better prepare disabled Alaskans for jobs.
- c. Lack of jobs for disabled Alaskans. Often the private sector either does not understand the needs of or has a knee-jerk reaction to hiring a disabled employee. In many cases, disabled employees need only minor accommodations that cost less than \$50 or \$100. We could improve the state ability to work with disability advocates to fully educate employers about these accommodations.

5) This is a problem of information provision and adequate funding. Many disabled Alaskans and their families just do not know all of the resources that are available to them in their community. We could do a better job in working with service providers to ensure that disabled individuals and their families have all available information about the full spectrum of community-based services that are available to them to help them lead a more independent life and maintain a community-based lifestyle. Additionally, there are already statutes on the books to nurture and protect disabled Alaskans who seek a more independent, community-based

lifestyle. However, the current state budget under funds the enforcement of these statutes.

6) I think much if this question was addressed quite fortuitously in the recent court settlement stating the State of Alaska must provide all necessary accommodations for all students, including those who are disabled, who take the exit exam. As a State Representative I will work to ensure that the accommodations required by this court settlement are enforced.

Mark Ames – I

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Michael Kelly – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Sean Ryan – I

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Christopher White – D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Bonnie Williams – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 8 – Denali/Railbelt

Joe Miller - R

Challenger

This candidate chose to respond indirectly to the questions, as follows.

"I have served as a judge for the past six years and am new to the political arena. Many of your questions pertain to individuals that have been involved in politics and have experience with the legislative issues posed by your questions.

However, like many people in Alaska, I have family members who have suffered from serious disabilities. My granddad was paralyzed from the waste down due to injuries suffered as a ranch hand. My other grandfather was crippled when he fell under a moving farm implement. My wife's grandmother suffered from debilitating Alzheimer's disease.

I vividly remember my granddad's struggles. Throughout my childhood and adolescent years, I used to help my wheelchair-bound granddad attempt to gain access to churches and other buildings. Given his weight, it was an incredible struggle for my father, uncles, cousins, and I to help granddad up and down stairs. It was even more of a struggle for granddad to find bathroom facilities that could accommodate him.

Unfortunately, state and federal laws did not change soon enough to benefit my grandparents. But this experience has left me sensitive to disability issues and open to real solutions to secure opportunity and self-sufficiency for people with disabilities."

David Guttenberg – D

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

Thomas Scarborough – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 9 - Fairbanks

Scott Kawasaki - D

Challenger

1) While a staff member for Representative Tom Brice, I worked on ADA compliance issues with the State, DHSS and the local government to get projects like curb cuts and street improvements funded in the budget. As a member of the Fairbanks City Council, I have met with federal ADA compliance folks to talk about accessibility issues downtown, especially in high traffic pedestrian outlets. We are working on comprehensive changes downtown and in most cases have changed out most of the curbs. I am interested in continuing to work with people with disabilities so that they have access to the community and work.

2) I would work with the groups that represent people with disabilities like ACCESS, Alaska, Fairbanks Resource Agency, the United Way, Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, Pioneer Homes and others to ensure that everyone has access to government and myself as an elected

representative. I would like to see people have availability of jobs at all levels of expertise and preference and would work to see that a possibility. Simple access to some parts of Fairbanks are poor due to lack of funding and non-compliance with the Federal ADA requirements of 91. I would work with the DOT and other agencies to ensure that we have proper funding and live up to our responsibility to all Alaskans.

3) As a longtime employee of the Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, I see the need to properly fund health programs, especially for those who need it most. This legislature and my opponent voted with the Murkowski administration to make cuts to a program that is valuable to the elderly, children and people with disabilities, but voted to give tax breaks to big oil companies. The priorities are wrong. I would fund the programs that directly help and affect people first. Medicaid programs are mostly funded through federal sources with a small percentage of general fund dollars in most cases and we should continue to provide those necessary funds during budget time.

4) This is a huge issue for me personally because I believe that everyone has a valuable skill and should have the right to work at a good-paying job. Job training programs through the state, through labor organizations and social service agencies are the best way to get people, especially with disabilities into work.

5) People have the right to choose where they live, work and play. The best thing that I can do as a representative is provide the needed infrastructure to ensure that they have their needs met, like a good paying job, access to health insurance and affordable housing. As a legislator, we should also look to ways that we continue to recruit and retain good healthcare and allied healthcare workers from social workers to nurses and doctors to ensure that healthcare remain affordable.

6) We need a change to the high school graduation exam that takes into consideration everyone's personal level of education and expertise. All people have intelligence, but not all people have the test-taking intelligence to pass a test. I would approve of a demonstration of competence that includes personal materials,

testimonials or a folder showing the kind of work that the child can perform. We also need to examine funding issues and perhaps fund more teachers so that they may provide the necessary attention to the children so that they can be successful.

Hadahra Ben-Israel – D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Jim Holm – R

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

District 10 - Fairbanks

Jay Ramras – R

Challenger

- 1a) We are presently building Pike's Park adjacent to Pike's Landing...it is ADA compliant.
 - b. We also built 28 log cabins on the grounds, completed this Spring and one of the cabins, the greenhouse and the ice cream parlor are all ADA friendly.
 - c. Thirdly, we hosted the Paralyzed Veterans of America last fall and again this fall to go moosehunting.
- 2a) Meet with groups like yours.
 - b. Push for universal adoption of ADA.
 - c. Work on equal access issues.
- 3) We need more doctors and nurses in our communities across the State of Alaska.
 - 4) It's the law. In addition, we need more education. Able-people often treat access-challenged people as though it's a communicable condition. We need to bring more education into the schools.
 - 5) I do not fully understand the intricacies of this issue – but it's so easy to see. This issue is about health and securing the dignity of the individual and must be addressed as a human rights issue.
 - 6) We need to consult with the various school districts around the State and enhance the

existing programs and create new ones to address precisely this issue.

Carole Newcomer - D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Nicholas Stepovich – R

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

District 15 -Talkeetna, Willow, Trapper Creek

Dale Adams – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Beverly Masek – R

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

Mark Neuman – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 21 - Fairbanks

Harry Crawford, Jr. – D

Incumbent

- 1) I do not know how to answer this questionnaire. I am not usually on the HESS committee and am not normally part of the discussion around legislation dealing with people with disabilities. However, the budget for Independent Living is under the Labor Dept budget and I fought hard to keep that funding from being cut. It was cut anyway but not to the extent it would have been without my efforts.
- 2) I want people with disabilities to have every opportunity they can to obtain education, job opportunity, independent living opportunity, or just to live in the community with dignity. I will support those efforts.
- 3) Health care is a right for every Alaskan/American and should not be denied to people because they are not able to secure health care through the private system. My most specific idea would be to make health insurance mandatory through one's job. If we are not going to a single payer system then no employer should

be able to opt out of the system. That should free up much of the Medicaid money to pare down the waitlist.

4) Expand educational and training opportunities as well as transportation and access to job opportunities. It just takes money and the commitment to do it.

5) Provide the money and commitment to do it.

6) Again I believe it costs money and requires the commitment to do it.

Jeff Gonnason – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 32 - Chugach State Park, Bird Creek

Mike Hawker – R

Incumbent

This candidate did not respond.

Matt Moore – D

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

District 33 – Soldotna

Harold “Hal” Smalley -D

Challenger

1a) As a member of the Kenai City Council (1988-1999) worked for, voted for, and received funding to build Senior Housing Center (39 Apartments) with each apartment designed for any potentially older Alaskan with a disability.

b. As a member of the Kenai City Council I helped fund remodeling of our Senior Center, City Hall, the Kenai Municipal Airport, and other city buildings to meet the ADA regulations.

c. As a member of the State Legislature (1999-2001) I voted for funding for seniors housing, Housing funding for disabled vets, full funding for Alaska’s Pioneer Homes to meet the needs of our Alaskan seniors.

d. As a classroom teacher I made educational accommodations in teaching delivery of educational program for students with

disabilities so they could have the opportunity to succeed in my classroom.

2a) My top priority is to develop and implement a long-range fiscal plan for future funding of all state programs, including those impacting the quality of life for Alaskans with disabilities.

b. support the return of funding for the longevity bonus program.

c. support funding necessary for Alaska’s Pioneer Homes to keep them operating and to help support facilities statewide that offer services for Alaskans with a disability.

3) An essential part of our state budget is a plan to include additional funding for Medicaid services. Our Alaskan seniors deserve better.

4) Alaskan businesses must be encouraged to employ Alaskans with disabilities. Under regulations which govern “equal employment opportunities”, all workers are entitled to employment opportunities. The state can offer certain tax advantages to those businesses hiring Alaskans with disabilities. I will support training opportunities and access to these programs for disabled Alaskans.

5) My office will always be open to any individuals for any reason whether it be in Juneau or at home in Kenai/Soldotna. Additionally I will be glad to meet with any individual or group prior to session either at my home, office or where it is convenient for individuals. I would be happy to meet with these groups to discuss legislation to be introduced which may assist them to secure medical care or any other service in which they may have need.

6) I will work with school districts and the University to make sure that funding is available for higher learning opportunities for those students (especially with a disability) who have demonstrated competence in academic assessment methods.

Melva Krogseng – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

Kurt Olson – R

Challenger

This candidate did not respond.

John Osborne, Sr. – R
Challenger
This candidate did not respond.

David Richards – R
Challenger
This candidate did not respond.

Kelly Wolf – R
Incumbent
This candidate did not respond.

**District 35 - Ismailof Island, Homer,
Halibut Cove**

Edward Martin, Jr. – I
Challenger
This candidate did not respond.

Paul Seaton – R
Incumbent
This candidate did not respond.

Deborah Germano – D
Challenger
This candidate did not respond.

**District 36 – Iliamna, Igiugig,
Akhiok...**

Gabrielle Ledoux – R
Challenger
This candidate did not respond.

Dan Ogg – R
Incumbent
This candidate did not respond.

Lorne White – R
Challenger
This candidate did not respond.

**District 37 - Adak, Aleknagik,
Amchitka...**

Carl Moses – D
Incumbent
This candidate did not respond.

Arthur Newman – R
Challenger
This candidate did not respond.

Editor's note: *This election edition of the "Speak Out!" newsletter would not have been possible without the help of Jamie Bourgeois, our Partners in Policymaking student assistant, and the former Partners in Policymaking interns from around the state. This group gently nudged candidates, directed them to resources, fielded questions, and entered all the responses. Thank you all!*



Don't Forget To Vote!

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The Center for Human Development: A University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disability Education, Service, and Research.