

Q1

Please provide your name:

Patricia Chesbro

Q2

Which office and district are you running for?

U.S. Senate

Q3

What is your vision for Alaska when it comes to reducing sexual assault and domestic violence? What steps are you prepared to take to get there?

Reducing sexual assault and domestic violence is one of the most significant and complex issues we face in Alaska. There are several necessary steps:

1. Protect victims from further harm. Make it easier to report victimization, believe victims, and provide safe spaces away from the abuser.
2. Ensure that the perpetrator has consequences for their actions. This should be rapid.
3. Help victims develop resilience as they heal from the attacks.
4. Care for any children who may have seen or been party to attacks of and from loved ones. We must expect that those children suffer from adverse childhood experiences.
5. Demand therapy for the perpetrators so that they understand the causes and results of their actions.

Q4

What responsibilities do you believe the Legislature and other elected officials hold in advancing efforts to intervene in and ultimately eliminate domestic violence and sexual assault in the state?

Elected officials must take this crisis seriously and set up and fund the structure to intervene in these situations. Further, elected officials must examine their own biases in relation to sexual assault and domestic violence. E.g., the victim is not at fault.

Q5

Victim/Survivor services in Alaska have been flat funded for many years and are facing a potential shortfall in future years due to decreasing federal funds. What are your thoughts on state funding to provide support services for victims of domestic and sexual violence?

As I said earlier, we are in crisis mode. This is as serious as extreme storms or earthquakes and should be treated with the emphasis of disasters. Funding should be dependable and ongoing.

Q6

Alaska Native women are disproportionately affected by domestic violence and sexual assault. What are your thoughts on supporting Alaska tribes' ability to strengthen local responses for survivors?

Tribes need tools to respond to and help survivors. We must depend on the local people to help to curb these crimes. Again, survivors need ongoing support. Tribal members must gain the skills to help survivors and perpetrators.

Q7

Children are a particularly vulnerable population and may be traumatized by living with an abusive person and witnessing violence perpetrated against a parent or caretaker. What remedies might you suggest to provide protection for these children?

Adverse childhood experiences often lead to future victimization or perpetration. We must assume that children are affected by traumatizing experiences and not wait until behaviors show up before we address these issues.

Q8

What is your opinion about an adult over the age of 30 having sex with someone that is only 16 or 17. Should it be a crime?

This is almost always victimization, whether or not force is involved. I am unsure whether or not it should be criminalized.

Q9

Do you believe reproductive rights should be the choice of an individual? If you do not, do you believe there should be choice for victims of incest, sexual and/or domestic violence?

Reproductive rights are always the choice of the individual.

Q10

The state of Alaska is experiencing a housing shortage statewide. This is impacting domestic and sexual violence survivors' ability to move forward with their lives. What would be your ideas to address this?

In more populous areas, we should look to increasing lower cost and safe housing. Rural areas need safe and warm structures.

Q11

Currently, the domestic violence response is largely a criminal justice response. Please share any ideas you have of other types of responses.

As I said earlier, there are many aspects of domestic violence to address. There are consequences for perpetrators, but also care for victims. In my experience, the care for victims is mostly provided by non-profit organizations. If that continues, we need to help such organizations with funding.

Q12

Currently there is no dedicated funding for programs to provide services to engage individuals who have abused their families. What would be your ideas to address how to provide services to people who choose to cause harm to their partners? Do you feel this is the responsibility of the government?

If we want to stop the cycle of violence, we need to help both perpetrators and victims.

Q13

Are you familiar with local programs that provide domestic violence and sexual assault services to victims across Alaska? Have you recently visited your local domestic violence/sexual assault shelter or victim services program? What is your plan to support these programs?

I was a board member for Alaska Family Services for many years. Though I have not recently visited, I support their efforts.