

Q1

Please provide your name:

Geran Tarr

Q2

Which office and district are you running for?

Senate J

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?

I often share that I have a vision of an Alaska where we don't lead the nation in rates of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. I have been working as hard as I can to achieve this. To date, we have passed several bills including multiple bills for the Rape Kit Reform Initiative (ending the backlog of untested rape kits and solving crimes), Erin's Law child sexual abuse prevention law, consent law rewrite, Child Abuse Prevention Month, extended the CDVSA and Suicide Prevention Council, and passed a trauma informed policy for Alaska. Each year we are making progress and I want to continue this work.

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?

We should be leaders, partners, and collaborators. We should listen to the front line workers and provide the resources they say are necessary to change the trend. You all know that prevention is key and yet we are currently funding very little prevention, for example. We have tremendous opportunity to take what we have learned and reimagine systems and improve outcomes. I am ready to continue working in partnership.

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?

We need to increase funding. This has to be prioritized. We have the funding. We need to make sure that the health of our people is as important as road building and other very high dollar items.

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?

We have many ways we could strengthen our relationships and delivery of justice. The new federal legislation opens up some new pathways to build upon. This work must continue and we must respect and honor tribal sovereignty. We also need to work to be more culturally responsive in our work. We need to recognize and work to understand the impact of trauma, inter-generational trauma, oppression, and systemic racism. We need to make sure all the voices are included in these discussions. We took an important step forward this year by creating a seat on the CDVSA for an Alaska Native individual. This is a start.

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?

I am very interested in how to work to support families earlier, farther upstream as they say. I first want the state to apply for a state plan amendment to allow for family planning to be covered by Medicaid. At this time 50% of births are paid for by Medicaid so that tells us a lot about the financial circumstances of the families. We know family planning is healthy and should embrace and educate Alaskans. We need to reinstate programs like the home nursing program that can serve to more quickly identify at risk families and get them services. We need more prevention efforts happening statewide. Related to the question above, we need to partner with Tribes in the care of our children.

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?

Yes. This should be a crime. We know this is predatory behavior. Teens deserve protection from predatory adults. I sponsored a bill to do this and worked hard to get this passed. The provision was removed by the Judiciary Chair.

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?

The right 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?

At the state level we have several options. We can increase the number of vouchers available and make sure the voucher amount remains competitive. That only works with available housing stock. To increase the housing stock, the state could incentivize private developers to build new housing through credits. The state could also incentivize redevelopment of vacant properties.

Q11

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

We are moving to the 2 generation response. We need to consider the whole family when addressing these issues. They need family supports in addition to safety. We want families to heal and move forward in whatever safe and healthy way that can be accomplished.

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?

We do have a constitutional obligation to provide rehabilitation and many of these individuals are in state custody. Yes, we should do this. Why? If only because 90% of individuals in state custody will get released back into the community. If you want them to behave differently then the time in custody is a good place to start. We are currently working with our intern to research this topic. We are preparing a white paper for review in December.

People can change. We have to believe in the power of people to change. When people know better they do better and many perpetrators are also victims. Their unresolved trauma comes out in many unhealthy ways and abusing others could be part of the cycle. We have to break these cycles. This is hard work, but the most important work because it's about the health and safety of our people.

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?

Yes. I am in contact with our local shelter. I have not visited since before COVID because it kind of put a stop on all of that. I try on an individual basis to financially support our local shelter. I advocate for funding for all the shelters. I attend events and share about them on social media.