

Q1

Please provide your name:

Andrew Gray

Q2

Which office and district are you running for?

State House of Representatives District 20 (UMED)

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?

The first step in reducing sexual assault and domestic violence in Alaska is educating the public and particularly our youth about the need for sexual consent, the right to stand up for oneself, the warning signs that sexual assault or domestic violence are imminent, and the knowledge that violence is never acceptable. The second step is to make sure that victims of sexual assault and domestic violence are aware of and are able to access support so that they can avoid further victimization. From the legislature, I would support funding for our organizations that provide the education and support needed to reduce sexual assault and domestic violence. I am also open to discussion of legislation that might support better education for the public and our youth about these issues.

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?

The legislature is the law-making body of our government and the primary purpose of laws should be to keep us safe. The responsibility of the legislature to advance efforts to intervene in and ultimately eliminate domestic violence and sexual assault in our state should be paramount.

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?

The state must find a way to eliminate any potential shortfall due to decreased federal funds. I believe more state funding should be provided to ensure services are available for victims of domestic and sexual violence. Again, the priority of the legislature should be to keep its constituents safe. Our state has an abysmal record on these issues and more needs to be done.

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?

I believe the legislature should support Alaska tribes' ability to strengthen local responses for survivors in whatever ways the Alaska tribes feel would be most helpful. This should be a collaborative process with the tribes leading the way with regards to what interventions would be most effective.

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?

Again, preventing abuse in the home to begin with would be the best way to protect these children. This is achieved through educating our young people about the need for sexual consent, the right to stand up for oneself, the warning signs when sexual assault and domestic violence are imminent, and the knowledge that violence is never acceptable. This lessens the chance that they will grow up to participate in the cycle of abuse themselves. However, for our children currently traumatized by living with an abusive person, we need the proper tools in place to ensure we can get those children out of an unsafe home when necessary.

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?

I believe it should be a crime for someone over the age of 30 to have sex with someone under the age of 18.

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?

I believe reproductive rights should be 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?

Housing and homelessness are the priority issues of my campaign. Once I am in the legislature, I will do everything in my power to incentivize affordable home construction throughout the state, prioritize long-term rentals over short-term rentals, and increase funding for our critical housing organizations. I am already working on these issues with stake-holders, subject matter experts, and members of municipal government. I welcome any additional ideas that ANDVSA may have with regards to specifically addressing the needs of domestic and sexual violence survivors.

Q11

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

I believe that preventing domestic violence involves significant education before the violence ever happens. Getting our education system more involved and increasing public outreach to educate the general public would also be helpful. I know some programs exist, so I would hope to bolster and strengthen those programs, and help create new ones as needed.

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?

I believe that rehabilitation is possible in many scenarios (perhaps not all). Having rehabilitation programs for incarcerated individuals would be the start, but establishing programs to reduce the chance of future violence by those who have abused their families would appear to be an important harm-reduction tactic that should be explored outside of the criminal justice system. I welcome additional education from ANDVSA with regards to this issue and how they government might participate in these efforts.

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 am planning to meet with Sexual Trauma Prevention and Response (STAR) in Anchorage and look forward to learning more about how I can best support their programs.