2026 CANDIDATES GUIDE

FEDERAL *and* GUBERNATORIAL

To view Candidate Questionnaires from those running for Statewide office, please visit nativefederation.org or scan this QR code to view the complete 2026 Digital Candidates Guide on our AFN app.

NATIVEFEDERATION.ORG

ABOUT THE AFN CANDIDATES GUIDE

The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) is committed to providing Alaska Native voters with the information they need to make informed decisions at the ballot box.

As part of that commitment, AFN invited all candidates appearing on the November 2026 General Election ballot to respond to a questionnaire addressing issues important to Alaska Native people and communities, as well as key statewide issues facing Alaska.

This Candidates Guide provides voters with an opportunity to learn more about the **Federal and Gubernatorial** candidates, their priorities, and their positions on issues that matter to Alaska. *To view questionnaires from those running for Statewide office, please visit nativefederation.org or scan the QR code below to view the complete 2026 Digital Candidates Guide on our AFN app.*

We encourage voters to review the responses, consider the candidates' perspectives, and participate fully in the 2026 General Election.

AFN is a nonpartisan organization. This guide is intended solely as a voter education resource and does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation of any candidate.

To ensure that voters hear directly from the candidates, AFN has not edited, altered, or proofread questionnaire responses. Responses are presented as submitted by each candidate. Candidates for each office all had the same opportunity to participate and received the same questions.

We hope this guide serves as a useful resource as Alaska Native voters prepare to make their voices heard in the 2026 General Election.

2026 CANDIDATES GUIDE

FEDERAL + GUBERNATORIAL

GOVERNOR

Dave Bronson / Josh Church *(no response)*

Jonathan S. "JKT" Kreiss-Tomkins / Zac Johnson (page 6)

Treg Taylor / Candi English *(no response)*

Bernadette M. Wilson / Michael K. Shower *(no response)*

U.S. SENATE

Gerald L. Heikes *(no response)*

Mary Peltola (page 14)

Daniel J. Sullivan Jr. *(no response)*

Dan S. Sullivan *(no response)*

U.S. HOUSE

Nick Begich *(no response)*

Eric Hafner *(no response)*

Bill Hill (page 23)

James C. "Jim" McDermott (page 32)

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OFFICE SOUGHT: GOVERNOR

JONATHAN KREISS-TOMKINS

I was born and raised in Sitka. Like a lot of kids in Southeast, I spent most of my time playing in the woods getting dirt under my fingernails. My dad kept the freezer full of venison and halibut and my mom worked as a family doctor in the local hospital. I graduated Sitka High School as an Eagle Scout.

I went to college on the East Coast where I got my first taste of traffic jams and 90-degree weather. I was starting my final year before graduation when a few friends from home called. Southeast Alaska's long-time representative in the Alaska Legislature was running for reelection — unopposed.

The incumbent had voted to give oil companies a massive tax break, shortchanging Alaskans and leaving our schools and infrastructure crumbling. So I left college, without a degree, and came home to kick off a scrappy, grassroots campaign, traveling by ferry and floatplane to knock on nearly every door across Southeast Alaska. I won — by 32 votes.

That was 14 years ago. Since then, I've won five elections fighting for working families, a strong economy, and a government that works for regular people. In Juneau, I worked across the aisle to reduce trawl bycatch, protect public schools, invest in basic infrastructure like roads and harbors, revitalize Alaska Native languages, and protect the $85 billion Permanent Fund.

Since I left the legislature three years ago, I've seen the same thing we all have: a distracted and dysfunctional state government that isn't working for Alaskans. Prices keep rising. Small businesses struggle to keep the lights on. Roads and bridges deteriorate. Schools close.

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

JONATHAN KREISS-TOMKINS

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Name / Office Sought / Political Party / Email / Campaign Website

Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins & Zac Johnson / Governor & Lt. Governor / Democrat & Independent / info@jktforak.com / jktforak.com

SUBSISTENCE & FOOD SECURITY

Yes or No questions:

Do you support balancing the membership to equally represent all user groups on the Board of Fish and Board of Game? Yes, I support balance on the Board of Fish and the Board of Game where all user groups have fair representation.

Do you support reforms increasing rural and Tribal representation on the Board of Fish & Board of Game? Yes, I want to elevate rural and tribal voices on the Board of Fish and Board of Game.

Will you support stronger accountability measures for commercial fisheries with high salmon bycatch? Yes.

Do you support enforcing existing state law to prioritize local subsistence needs over commercial harvest during periods of shortage? Yes.

Short Answer:

Subsistence in Alaska Native communities is essential to food security, culture, identity, and the continuation of our way of life for future generations. What are your plans to ensure these rights are not only protected, but expanded? Protecting subsistence and Title VIII of ANILCA are critical priorities for me. I would end state litigation against Title VIII, defend the rural preference, and invest in robust, scientific management of our fish, wildlife, and state lands agencies so that our subsistence resource stocks are thriving and sustainable for generations to come. I also want to make sure that the Division of Subsistence is fully funded and its work respected.

Do you support Tribal co-management? Please provide a detailed response explaining your position, why Tribal co-management is important to Alaska Native communities and to the future of Alaska's lands, waters, fish, and wildlife. As governor, I would honor the government-to-government relationship with tribes. I will look for ways to increase cooperation between the State of Alaska and tribal governments, especially with compacts to share management responsibilities where it makes sense.

I would look to the work of organizations like the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission as one model for partnership with the State of Alaska.

How would you support the development and implementation of a Native-led management framework to ensure Alaska Native communities have a stronger role in managing their subsistence resources? I would maintain the Governor's Tribal Advisory Council established by Governor Walker and maintained by Governor Dunleavy. If elected, I will appoint a Senior Advisor for Alaska Native and Rural Affairs to work directly in the governor's office.

I also want to restore balance to the Boards of Fish and Game. That means regional balance and balance between user groups. I am open to structural and process changes for both boards that result in prudent management of Alaska's resources based on science and traditional knowledge.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Yes or No questions:

Do you support the federal land-into-trust process for federally recognized Alaska Native Tribes? Yes.

Do you support meaningful Tribal consultation before major state projects? Yes.

Do you support increased funding to the renewable energy fund? Yes.

Will you commit to protecting the Power Cost Equalization (PCE) program and opposing any legislation that would undermine its goals or threaten its funding? Yes. I would also veto any budget action that would "raid" the $1B PCE endowment.

Short Answer:

What actions would you take to reduce rural Alaska energy costs? I want to advance an energy bond package on the 2028 ballot that includes investment in new energy generation and storage across Alaska, including renewable energy projects in rural Alaska and reducing reliance on costly diesel. I want to increase support for the Renewable Energy Grant Fund in the state's capital budget. These investments have been needed for a long time, but the spike in diesel prices rural Alaska is experiencing make them more urgent than ever.

The state should also look at promoting operating economies of scale in rural Alaska. There's a great model in AVEC, which centralizes institutional knowledge and creates operating economies of scale to bring energy costs down.

I will protect the Power Cost Equalization program. I will veto any attempt to raid the PCE endowment. I would look for opportunities, working closely with Bush Caucus legislators, to ensure that rural communities do not see their PCE support reduced even if they reduce their reliance on diesel by transitioning to alternative energy generation and storage.

I will consider updates to the Regulatory Commission of Alaska's statutory guidance on rate increases to ensure that rural consumers are protected from unreasonable spikes in energy costs.

What specific investments or policies will you support to improve drinking water, wastewater, broadband, and other essential infrastructure in rural Alaska? Every community in Alaska should have access to safe drinking water, reliable sewer, and high-speed internet. No exceptions.

I will make funding for the Village Safe Water program a priority in my administration's budgeting. I am following the planned Quintillion fiber optic loop from Nome to Homer to build redundancy against fiber breaks. I would support the work of the Alaska Broadband Office to fully support Broadband Access Grants and other investments that the state makes in rural broadband access. I would look for ways to increase access to satellite broadband where it is cheaper and more reliable than fiber optic broadband.

At this time, many critical bulk fuel storage facilities in rural Alaska are in need of major maintenance. What is your plan to address this issue before it becomes a major environmental and energy crisis? Bulk fuel storage facilities in rural Alaska are critical infrastructure. I would include investments in fuel storage maintenance in my capital budgets. I would look for ways to partner with the federal government on this infrastructure maintenance. I am encouraged by recent federal investments in rural fuel storage maintenance and would work to make sure we aren't leaving federal dollars on the table that could help finance fuel storage upgrades and repair.

VOTING & REPRESENTATION

Yes or No questions:

Do you support increasing language assistance for Alaska Native voters? Yes. As the sponsor of the legislation that made Alaska's Native languages official languages of the State of Alaska alongside English, supporting Alaska's Native languages and Native language speakers is near and dear to me.

Will you support legislation expanding access to voting for rural and remote Alaskans? Yes. I would also have signed the omnibus elections reform legislation that Gov. Dunleavy vetoed in 2026.

Will you oppose legislation reducing opportunities to vote by mail or to vote early? Yes.

Will you commit to consulting Alaska Tribal governments before supporting major election law changes? Yes. A legislative process on elections legislation that did not involve consultation with major stakeholders like tribal governments would not be thorough.

Short Answer:

Please explain your position on the voting reform legislation (SB64) and any changes you would support to improve Alaska's election system. I support SB 64, and would sign similar legislation as governor. When I was in the legislature, I worked across the aisle to develop the bipartisan elections reform legislation that SB 64 is based on. That legislation would have established ballot curing, removed the superfluous witness requirement for mail ballots, and improved voting access in rural Alaska.

There continues to be significant voting access challenges in rural Alaska, including polling locations not opening, challenges securing poll workers in remote communities, and unequal access to early voting and malfunctioning equipment. If elected, how would you work to address these disparities and ensure every Alaskan has equal access to voting? I would work with Zac Johnson, who is my lieutenant governor running mate, to fully staff the Division of Elections (DOE). DOE should have proactive plans to anticipate ballot access issues. Mail ballots should be reliable, and should be counted in a central location like Anchorage if they can't be mailed directly to a regional office on time. DOE Division should have the capacity to send staff or paid volunteers to rural Alaska communities where poll workers cannot be found in the community. Zac and I are also interested in a collaboration between DOE and Department of Public Safety where "election swat teams" could be flown out to rural Alaska communities that need support in order to facilitate all communities, no matter how rural, having the opportunity to vote.

We would also seek input from organizations like Get Out the Native Vote and AFN on the obstacles facing rural Alaska voters and how to remove them.

EDUCATION

Yes or No questions:

Do you support State-Tribal Education Compacts? Yes, but this is an important policy and I want to make sure we get it right. As governor, I would make policy based on the results of the five pilot programs and the experience of participating communities. If the evidence shows that compacting is strengthening cultural connections, earning the confidence of families, and improving student outcomes, I would support thoughtful expansion in partnership with tribes and regional nonprofits. Throughout that process, my administration would remain committed to ensuring that every compact school delivers a high-quality public education while protecting Native languages and culture.

Do you support increasing the Base Student Allocation to close the rural education funding gap? Yes. Restoring adequate education funding is my first priority.

Do you support Indigenous cultural programs in K–12 schools? Yes.

Do you support a defined-benefit retirement system for teachers? Yes.

Short Answer:

Education in Alaska, both urban and rural, has faced significant funding challenges over the years. What do you believe the K-12 Base Student Allocation should be, and should the BSA be automatically inflation proofed? I think the BSA needs to be increased to restore purchasing power for school districts, and so that the quality of k-12 education in Alaska is not so severely affected.

What specific strategies and policies would you implement to address the challenges to improve teacher retention and ensure that all students, particularly in rural areas, have access to high-quality educators? I support restoring a defined benefit pension for Alaska's public employees and teachers. My administration would work with school boards and REAAs to find ways to increase teacher compensation to be more competitive with Lower 48 jobs. I want to find ways to increase not just state funding for rural teacher housing, but also to offer state support to maintain rural teacher housing after it is built.

What measures will you take to expand access to early childhood education programs for Alaska children? I support increased state support for early childhood education programs in the budget process. I want to work to establish public-private partnerships to subsidize child care programs.

I would like to consider ways to partner with tribal governments to support early childhood education, early learning intervention, and child care programs.

How do you plan to expand vocational and technical training programs that align with the economic needs of Alaska Native communities? The labor shortage in the trades, which we see across the economy, is a real problem. Weaving apprenticeships into Alaska high schools is exciting and makes a lot of sense. Vo-tech should be a key part of our K-12 system, extending into post-secondary.

I want to find ways to make the same vo-tech education available to urban high school students available in rural Alaska, through investments in rural school facilities or through state travel assistance for rural Alaska students.

PROTECTING INDIGENOUS WAYS OF LIFE AND STRENGTHENING STATE & TRIBAL PARTNERSHIPS

Yes or No questions:

Will you support meaningful Tribal consultation in State actions and decision-making that impacts tribes and tribal communities, recognizing Tribal sovereignty and ensuring that the State is guided by Tribal perspectives to build strong, respectful partnerships that better serve all Alaskans? Yes

Will you oppose any State action that diminishes or bypasses Tribal sovereignty? Yes

Would you support tribal liaison positions in every State department? I want to establish a meaningful government-to-government relationship between state government and tribes. Whether that means a cabinet level position, a governor's office coordinator, or tribal liaisons in every agency, or something else — that is the outcome I want to get to. I don't want to commit to a specific approach until I can better understand the various approaches, including learning from other states that have modeled government-to-government relationships with their tribes, such as New Mexico and Washington.

Short Answer:

What actions would you support to protect and strengthen Alaska Native cultures, languages, traditions, and ways of life? In the legislature, I was proud to sponsor legislation that made Alaska Native languages official languages of Alaska.

As governor, I would expand language immersion programs for Alaska Native languages in our public schools, and put up bilingual Alaska Native language signage in public facilities and on roads. I will also encourage the Department of Education to support programs like Sealaska Heritage Institute's Tlingit Culture, Language and Literacy program.

How will you contribute to building a stronger relationships between State, Tribal and Federal Governments? I will end lawsuits by the state against the federal government on subsistence priority and co-management. As governor, I would seek input and collaboration from tribal governments and Alaska Native corporations on shared priorities. I want to continue the work the Walker Administration started to partner with tribal governments by compacting.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Yes or No questions:

Will you support funding for additional Village Public Safety Officers? Yes. Increasing public safety in rural Alaska would be a priority for my administration. It is unacceptable that there are Alaska communities that are not adequately served by law enforcement.

Will you support continued funding for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP) Investigators at the Department of Public Safety? Yes. The four dedicated MMIP investigators at the Department of Public Safety serve an essential function. This function will be a priority for the Department of Public Safety, and I will work with my commissioner to assess if more investigators are needed.

Will you work to strengthen federal, state and tribal law enforcement agencies and increase coordination in reporting, investigations and data sharing? Yes

Short Answer:

How will you work to ensure that every Alaskan community has a full-time (or otherwise adequate) public safety presence? We need to increase the number of VPSOs to provide adequate public safety presence for rural Alaska. I want to increase the funding for VPSO grants, and find creative ways to ensure that every VPSO has access to the health and retirement benefits other public safety officers in Alaska have access to. I support the restoration of a defined benefit pension for Alaska law enforcement and other public employees to increase recruitment and retention. I want to make sure that VPSOs are included in this benefit.

Alaska has some of the highest rates of domestic violence, sexual assault and missing and murdered Indigenous people in the Nation. What are your solutions to address this crisis? I support steady, sufficient funding for shelters, victim services, behavioral health care, and culturally appropriate programs, especially in rural and Alaska Native communities. I would look for ways to ensure that tribal, local, state, and federal law enforcement coordinate better so cases are investigated quickly and families get clear communication and support.

Prevention should begin early, with education on healthy relationships, consent, and recognizing abuse, alongside efforts to tackle risk factors like housing instability, substance abuse, and limited access to behavioral health care.

Victims and families need support, including information on legal processes, counseling, and other services. What actions will you take to support domestic violence and sexual assault victims and their families? As governor, I would make sure my budgets put real money into shelters, safe housing, and the local and tribal organizations that help victims get to safety and rebuild. I want to increase state support for sexual assault response teams and forensic medical care so survivors can get treatment and have evidence collected without leaving their communities. I would work with my Departments of Public Safety and Law to prioritize arresting and prosecuting perpetrators, and getting law enforcement, prosecutors, and tribal and state courts working together so fewer cases slip away.

OFFICE SOUGHT: U.S. SENATE

MARY SATTLER PELTOLA

Peltola was born in Anchorage, Alaska on August 31, 1973 and raised on the Kuskokwim River in Kwethluk, Tuntutuliak, Platinum, and Bethel. Her Yupik name is Akalleq. She attended the University of Northern Colorado from 1991 – 1994 for elementary education. Additionally she's taken courses with the University of Alaska Fairbanks from 1994 – 1995, the University of Alaska Southeast from 1995 – 1997 and the University of Alaska Anchorage from 19997 – 1998. In college she worked for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game as a herring and salmon technician.

In 1996 Peltola began an internship with the Alaska state legislature under Rep. Irene Nicholia and that same year ran for the Bethel representative seat but lost to the incumbent. She worked reporter and as the campaign manager for Willie Kasayulie. She served in the Alaska House of Representatives, serving 39th district from 1999 to 2003 and the 38th district from 2003 to 2009. While in the House, she worked on the Bush Caucus. In 2010 Peltola helped with the write-in campaign for Lisa Murkowski. She worked as a manager of community development and sustainability at the Donlin Gold Mine Project from 2008 to 2014. Peltola was elected to Bethel City Council from 2011 to 2013. She worked as a state lobbyist from 2015 to 2017. Peltola served as the executive director of the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission from 2017 to 2022. From 2020 to 2021, she served as a judge on the Orutsararmuit Native Council Tribal Court. On August 16, 2022, she won the special election for the seat following the death of Rep. Don Young, and then also won the general election on Nov. 8, 2022. Peltola, a Yup'ik Alaska Native, is first Alaska Native member of Congress and the first woman to represent Alaska in the House of Representatives.

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

MARY SATTLER PELTOLA

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Name / Office Sought / Political Party / Email / Campaign Website

Mary Sattler Peltola / U.S. Senate / Democrat / Mary@marypeltola.com / marypeltola.com

SUBSISTENCE & FISHERIES

Yes or No questions:

Will you support meaningful government-to-government Tribal consultation before federal actions affecting Tribal Lands, resources, and communities? Yes

Would you support amending ANCSA to authorize Alaska Native management of fish and wildlife on all Native Corporation-owned lands in Alaska? Yes

Do you support expanding Tribal co-management of fish and wildlife resources? Yes

Do you support prioritizing local subsistence needs over commercial harvest during periods of shortage? Yes

Short Answer:

1. How would you support the development and implementation of a Native-led management framework to ensure Alaska Native communities have a stronger role in managing their subsistence resources? Native communities must have a seat at the table when these decisions are made. I will bring my lived experience as a former employee of a tribal co-management body to Washington to fight for our communities. I will champion legislation to ensure Alaska Native voices are recognized and taken into account in the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council process as well as in the Federal Subsistence Management Program. I will always advocate for Native communities to have a say in management systems to better ensure continued access to subsistence resources now and for our future generations.

2. What is your perspective on the current dual (federal-state) management system for subsistence hunting and fishing in Alaska? Do you believe it adequately serves Alaska Native communities? The bifurcated system we have devolved into creates unnecessary confusion for hunters and fishermen. Federal laws protecting rural consumption should be respected by the state of Alaska, particularly since the federal rural preference only goes into effect in times of shortage.

3. Would you advocate for amendments to federal laws such as ANILCA, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and the Marine Mammal Protection Act to ensure consultation with Alaska Native Tribes, Corporations, and organizations; establish co-management standards; and increase funding to support these efforts? Yes. These federal laws were enacted decades ago and need to be updated to reflect the changes in abundance, availability, invasive species, and allow tribes to have more say so in the eligibility of hunters and fishermen.

4. What actions would you take to limit bycatch by commercial trawlers in federal waters and to improve coordination amongst state and federal agencies on salmon recovery efforts? Out-of-state factory trawlers have exploited Alaska fisheries – creating excessive bycatch, and ravaging the ocean floor while Alaska fishermen and communities suffer the consequences. It's beyond time we ban out-of-state bottom trawlers. I will also continue the fight in the Senate to keep mid-water trawlers off bottom, ensuring that trawlers can't hide behind outdated definitions and harm our fish stocks. I will also demand NOAA crack down on enforcing existing laws protecting a community first approach and limit bycatch. I will keep fighting for a modernized Magnuson-Stevens Act to hold fishery councils accountable for prioritizing sustainable stocks, reducing bycatch, and protecting the communities most impacted by fishery declines.

VOTING & REPRESENTATION

Yes or No questions:

Do you support increased federal funding to improve voting access in rural and Tribal communities? Yes.

Will you support meaningful Tribal consultation before advancing federal election legislation?

Yes.

Will you support the Native American Voting Rights Act to establish explicit federal protections for tribal ID acceptance, enhance voter registration sights, and equitable ballot drop off access? Yes.

Will you oppose the SAVE Act or any federal legislation that imposes voter ID requirements that would disproportionately burden Alaska Native voters in rural and remote communities? Yes.

Short Answer:

1. Please explain your position on the SAVE Act and how you believe it would affect Alaska voters, particularly those in rural and Tribal communities. Election security is key – but election security can't come at the cost of silencing Alaska voices. Bills like the SAVE Act might work for the Lower 48, but it would force costly and time consuming travel for thousands of rural Alaskans to obtain necessary proof of citizenship, ultimately making it much harder to vote. I oppose the SAVE Act. This is not a red or blue issue, this is about ensuring Alaskans are able to vote.

2. A reliable mail service is essential to ensure equal access to voting in Alaska. How will you use your oversight authority to improve the United States Postal Service to ensure that all Alaskans can fully participate in elections? I believe everyone who is eligible to vote should have access to the ballot box, and one-size-fits-all rules from DC rarely work for large rural states like Alaska. Here in Alaska, mail-in voting isn't just about convenience, it's a necessity. For folks living in the 82% of our state that's off the road system, it can be the only way of casting their ballot. It is already a challenge to ensure mail is picked up in a timely manner in these communities. Mail is delivered by plane all over rural Alaska, and our weather can make it hard to fly. This is why I would protect our state law which counts ballots that are postmarked by Election Day and arrive within 10 days. It's a specific solution to Alaska's unique needs. This isn't about partisanship or about winning a particular election. Folks across the political spectrum mail in their ballots. We need reliable mail service for shipping medication, mail orders, and to take care of our finances. It is a critical service and we must do better.

3. How would you describe the importance of voting and civic engagement to our youth and new voters, especially within Alaska Native communities? For the sake of ourselves and our communities, it is our duty to vote. Alaskans deserve a seat at the table in Washington, D.C., and it is critical that we vote to send a Representative who will fight to lower grocery and energy costs, tackle DC corruption and corporate greed, and fight for continued sovereignty and self-determination for our Native communities. Our system only works when the majority of eligible voters participate in elections.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Yes or No questions:

Will you oppose legislation that weakens or rolls back protections under the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act? Yes.

Will you support increasing federal appropriations for programs that reduce energy costs in rural Alaska, including LIHEAP and Tribal energy programs? Yes.

Will you oppose legislation that exempts federal infrastructure, mining, oil and gas, or other resource development projects from meaningful Tribal consultation and environmental review? Yes.

Will you support legislation and appropriations that increase funding for climate resilience, erosion prevention, and community relocation for Alaska communities facing climate-related threats? Yes.

Short Answer:

1. What federal investments would you prioritize to reduce energy costs in rural Alaska? Alaskans deserve energy solutions that are designed for our unique needs. I will fight for targeted federal funding for programs like LIHEAP, the Denali Commission's High Energy Cost and Bulk Fuel Loan programs, and USDA Rural Utilities Service energy programs to expand village micro-grids, modernize rural energy distribution, increase reliability, and reduce costs for Alaskans.

2. What specific actions will you take to address environmental and climate-related impacts in Alaska? It's beyond time that Alaska had 21st century energy infrastructure to keep up with 21st century demand. I will fight for targeted investments to modernize aging and deteriorating energy grids across the state – including the Railbelt – so that communities aren't paying higher energy prices for less efficient transmission and less reliable delivery. In Congress, I fought to secure funding to upgrade the Railbelt to be 85% electric by 2040. I will fight to restore those federal tax credits for solar, wind, hydropower projects that were cut by DC's reconciliation bill, and push for federal funding to diversify energy inputs for Alaska's Railbelt. Alaskans need more energy in our portfolio to drive down costs, and I will fight to make it happen.

3. What specific actions will you take to protect LIHEAP from federal budget cuts and ensure stable predictable funding for Alaska's heating assistance program? I believe that no Alaskan should ever have to choose between heating their home and putting food on the table. That's why I will fight to expand and modernize the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program to help Alaskans afford heat and ensure DC insiders aren't leaving Alaska families out in the cold because of government shutdowns or funding delays.

4. If Congress considers legislation that would weaken environmental protections or reduce Tribal consultation requirements, how would you evaluate and vote on those proposals? I have fought for Alaska Natives across the political spectrum to be heard by DC insiders and I will always fight to make sure our voices are included on decisions that impact our land and our lives. Lower 48 bureaucrats should not be empowered to bypass Alaskans and our elected officials to provide one-size-fits-all solutions. I will fight to ensure Alaska communities are in the driver's seat for decisions impacting our state.

EDUCATION

Yes or No questions:

Will you support full funding of the Johnson O'Malley (JOM) program, which provides supplemental support for Alaska Native students in public schools? Yes.

Will you support full funding of Title VI Indian Education grants, which directly support Alaska Native students in public school systems? Yes.

Will you oppose any federal cuts to Impact Aid funding, which supports rural Alaska school districts serving Alaska Native students? Yes.

Short Answer:

1. Recruiting and retaining qualified teachers, especially in rural and remote communities, has long been a challenge in Alaska, contributing to gaps in education quality and student outcomes. What specific strategies and policies would you implement to address these challenges, improve teacher retention, and ensure that all students, particularly in rural areas, have access to high-quality educators? Quality teachers are foundational for successful school outcomes. This is why I cosponsored H.R.4550 to carry out a grant program to support the recruitment and retention of paraprofessionals in public elementary schools, secondary schools, and preschool programs. I will continue that fight in the United States Senate.

2. What measures will you take to expand access to early childhood education programs for Alaska Native children? Early education is critical, which is why I fought and secured millions in federal funding for headstart programs in Alaska to help every child reach their full potential. In the U.S. Senate, I will fight to protect the program, secure federal dollars to match Alaska's unique childcare needs, and work for real solutions to our childcare crisis.

3. How do you plan to expand vocational and technical training programs that align with the economic needs of Alaska Native communities? Post-secondary education and training for communities is critical to ensuring that Alaska jobs are filled by Alaskans. I have sponsored the Youth Workforce Readiness Act to establish a competitive grant program to support out-of-schooltime youth workforce readiness programs, providing employability skills development, career exploration, employment readiness training, mentoring, work-based learning, and workforce opportunities for eligible youth. I also believe we need to expand and protect federal funding for our job corps programs to support clear pathways with free training into career paths that need workers. I will continue this fight in the United States Senate.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Yes and No questions:

Will you lead and support efforts to increase sustainable federal funding to support Tribal Justice Programs including Tribal Courts, Tribal Police, and investigative resources? Yes.

Will you work with federal, state and tribal law enforcement agencies to coordinate in reporting, investigations and sharing data? Yes.

Will you support up to date relevant training, wellness support, pay equity, and benefits to help remedy staffing shortages and high turnover for tribal and village law enforcement? Yes.

Short Answer:

1. How will you work to ensure that every Alaskan community has a full-time (or otherwise adequate) public safety presence? From my time chairing the bipartisan Bush Caucus in the State Legislature to securing public safety resources for Village Public Safety Officers to securing critical investment in local law enforcement during my time in the U.S. House of Representatives, investing in public safety has always been one of my top priorities. Alaskans have been vocal that more communities, villages, and towns need basic law enforcement. I will continue to advocate for more funding to protect our families, greater authority for our villages and localities in combatting crime when it occurs, and overseeing the provision of public safety across our state.

2. In VAWA 2022, Congress recognized the inherent authority of Alaska Native Tribes to exercise criminal and civil jurisdiction over all Indians present in their Villages. Do you support incorporating the definition of 'Village' from VAWA 2022 into all public safety statutes, regulations, policies, and implementation strategies? Yes. No one should feel unsafe in their community, regardless of where they live. One of the things I appreciated about VAWA 2022 was the authority it granted, albeit in a targeted capacity, to our Tribes as partners in the provision of justice. That approach ought to be expanded. I will continue to fight for proper implementation of the law so that Native communities can have more say in keeping their communities safe.

3. The Alaska Federation of Natives has called on the Department of the Interior to provide dedicated annual non-competitive base funding for P.L. 280 Tribes to develop and sustain tribal court systems and support public safety services. Do you support this initiative, and how would you work to ensure that funding meets the budgetary needs of Tribes in Alaska? Yes, as a former tribal judge, I'm proud to be a previous recipient of AFN's endorsement based on my record of championing funding for Tribal courts and other programs, such as drug treatment options through the Modernizing Opioid Treatment Access Act, which I sponsored. I will continue to sponsor and vote for legislation that will directly increase funding for Tribes as well as bills that allow for indirect funding.I will also continue the fight for our landless communities to form corporations and receive the lands and resources they are entitled to.

4. Alaska has some of the highest rates of missing and murdered Indigenous people in the Nation. The Not Invisible Act Commission was established in 2020, and their report Not One More was released in November 2023 with many recommendations specific to Alaska. This report has now been deleted from the DOJ website, cases continue to remain unsolved, and Alaska Native people continue to experience high rates of violence and murder. What are your solutions to address the MMIP crisis? Behind every statistic is a person, a family, and a story. We honor their lives by refusing to look away, standing with families still searching, and demanding action. Alaska has the fourth-highest number of cases of MMIP in the country and we need real investment in local law enforcement and resources to address the crisis. I was proud to lead the floor debate and the ultimate passage of the amendment to the Not Invisible Act to extend and expand funding the Department of Interior and the Department of Justice's "Joint Commission on Reducing Violent Crime Against Indians." I will work across the aisle to ensure that there is increased communication

and coordination across local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies to ensure that we tackle this epidemic and keep our communities safe.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Yes or No questions:

Will you support the 29 recommendations from the Commission on Native Children Report that would improve outcomes for Native children and youth in four main areas, including education and job training, physical, mental and behavioral health, child welfare and juvenile justice. Yes

Affordable housing is in critically short supply, contributing to various social challenges. Funding under the Native American Housing and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) is the main source of federal assistance to provide safe, accessible, and affordable housing to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. Do you support reauthorizing and adequately funding NAHASDA? Yes

Will you advocate for inflation-proofing NAHASDA funds to ensure long-term stability for tribal housing programs? Yes

Short Answer:

1. Chronic diseases such as diabetes and respiratory illness disproportionately affect Alaska Native communities, and the Indian Health Service has historically been underfunded. What steps will you take to ensure that IHS receives adequate funding to address these health disparities and meet the healthcare needs of Alaska Natives? I support full funding, advanced appropriations, and mandatory funding for IHS to create the stability and predictability needed to address chronic diseases. I have sponsored bills to protect the healthcare of Alaska Natives such as the bipartisan Telehealth Expansion Act of 2023 to expand affordable care to rural Alaska Natives. I also signed on to a bipartisan letter demanding mandatory funding for IHS in federal budgets to address the disruptions and chronic underfunding of IHS. I will continue this fight for our communities in the United States Senate.

2. What strategies will you employ to increase access to comprehensive substance abuse treatment programs in rural areas, and how will you ensure that mental health services are integrated into these efforts to support long-term recovery and community wellness? Substance abuse is a problem that has touched practically every family in Alaska. This is why I sponsored the Supporting Families through Addiction Act, a bill which would establish a grant program for family community organizations that provide support for individuals struggling with substance use disorder and their families. Affordable treatment is critical so people can fully complete their treatment programs. This is why I sponsored the Improving Access to Mental Health Act, to improve access to mental health services under the Medicare program. I will fight for increased resources for Alaska Native communities and rural areas to ensure that every Alaskan is able to combat addiction and has access to mental health services on a local level. Too often, Alaska Natives are forced to

travel far from their home communities in order to receive the treatment they need. I would fight to fully fund and support our rural health infrastructure and ensure we have more treatment beds in our communities.

3. Alaska Native communities are facing a severe drug crisis, including the impacts of heroin, meth, and fentanyl. How would you advocate for ongoing efforts to protect and enhance Alaska Native communities in combating this crisis? Substance abuse related issues are not limited to major cities, rural communities are increasingly seeing the impacts of drugs and controlled substances in their communities. In the U.S. Senate, I will fight to ensure that public safety is funded at adequate levels so that villages can exercise the self-determined solutions they need to prevent drugs from reaching their communities. All communities deserve access to quality treatment for substance abuse. This is why I sponsored the Telehealth Response for E-prescribing Addiction Therapy Services Act, to allow for the use of telehealth in substance use disorder treatment. In the Senate I will fight to ensure that every Native community has the resources needed to tackle addiction and keep our communities strong.

OFFICE SOUGHT: U.S. HOUSE

BILL HILL

Bill Hill is Dena'ina Athabascan and a lifelong Alaskan.

Bill grew up in a small village in Bristol Bay, Alaska – the home of the largest salmon run in the world. His childhood was spent subsistence fishing and hunting, trapping, and raising and racing sled dog teams with his family. Hard work was built into everyday life – whether packing water, chopping wood, or helping fill the freezer for winter.

Bill has been a commercial fisherman for as long as he could work.

He started setnetting as a young kid, before joining his dad on the family drift boat when he was 12. He's fished every fishing season in Bristol Bay since.

Bill's also worked union construction jobs in rural Alaska, from building houses, working on remote health clinics and canneries, and on a crew that installed the sewer system in the Bristol Bay Borough.

A son of two teachers, Bill spent nearly 25 years working as a teacher, a principal, and a superintendent. In 2023 he was named Alaska Superintendent of the Year.

To keep more resources from the fishing industry in his town, Bill and his wife started Bristol Bay Brailer, a textile manufacturing business that supplies custom-made brailers for the commercial fishing fleet.

Bill is a husband, dad of four, and Chada (grandpa) to 7. Bill and his family have lived in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau.

Now he and his wife Diane are back in Naknek, population 470.

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

BILL HILL

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Name / Office Sought / Political Party / Email / Campaign Website

Bill Hill / U.S. House of Representatives, Alaska At-Large / Independent (nonpartisan) / team@billhillforalaskans.com / billhillforalaskans.com

SUBSISTENCE & FISHERIES

Yes or No questions:

Will you support meaningful government-to-government Tribal consultation before federal actions affecting Tribal Lands, resources, and communities? Yes

Would you support amending ANCSA to authorize Alaska Native management of fish and wildlife on all Native Corporation-owned lands in Alaska? Yes

Do you support expanding Tribal co-management of fish and wildlife resources? Yes

Do you support prioritizing local subsistence needs over commercial harvest during periods of shortage? Yes

Short Answer:

How would you support the development and implementation of a Native-led management framework to ensure Alaska Native communities have a stronger role in managing their subsistence resources? I served 15 years on my village corporation's board, 13 of them as president. Alaska Natives have proven we are the best decision-makers on the issues that affect our communities. We have shown it through tribal health care, child welfare and local governance, and fish and wildlife should be no different.

I support expanding tribal co-management and strengthening the role of tribes and Native corporations in management decisions affecting their lands and communities. I want a tribal seat on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, because subsistence users need to be at the table where the decisions actually get made.

What is your perspective on the current dual (federal-state) management system for subsistence hunting and fishing in Alaska? Do you believe it adequately serves Alaska Native communities? No. The split federal-state system creates confusion and uncertainty, and rural subsistence users are not prioritized. Alaska should be able to recognize the unique importance of subsistence

practices that have existed for thousands of years and prioritize them. You have my commitment to support efforts that bring Alaska into alignment with Title VIII of ANILCA, and I am in favor of an amendment to the state constitution to allow a rural priority for subsistence. Aligning the two would simplify management and better protect the people who depend on it. I will also defend the federal rural subsistence priority under ANILCA and oppose any effort to weaken it.

Would you advocate for amendments to federal laws such as ANILCA, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and the Marine Mammal Protection Act to ensure consultation with Alaska Native Tribes, Corporations, and organizations; establish co-management standards; and increase funding to support these efforts? Yes. Consultation should happen before decisions are made, not after. I want co-management standards written into statute instead of left to whichever administration is in office, with funding attached. For Magnuson-Stevens, I would start with a tribal seat on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. My opponent Nick Begich opposes adding a Tribal seat. On the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the co-management agreements with Alaska Native organizations have worked, and they should be strengthened and funded. On ANILCA, I would protect the rural subsistence priority and oppose efforts to weaken it.

What actions would you take to limit bycatch by commercial trawlers in federal waters and to improve coordination amongst state and federal agencies on salmon recovery efforts? As a lifelong subsistence fisherman, I know how important fish is to our communities. We need more action on bycatch, and Alaskans are calling for accountability. We need to set strict, low bycatch limits and hold bad actors accountable. If an operation cannot meet updated limits or bottom contact regulations, it should not be fishing in our waters. If subsistence fishermen and small in-state operations can play by the rules, so can out-of-state industrial trawlers.

I would also support stronger monitoring and enforcement through NOAA and the Council process, and increase funding for salmon habitat restoration, fish passage and research into the declining runs in Western and Interior Alaska. Families on the Yukon and Kuskokwim should not bear the burden of weak management decisions.

VOTING & REPRESENTATION

Yes or No questions:

Do you support increased federal funding to improve voting access in rural and Tribal communities? Yes

Will you support meaningful Tribal consultation before advancing federal election legislation? Yes

Will you support the Native American Voting Rights Act to establish explicit federal protections for tribal ID acceptance, enhance voter registration sites, and equitable ballot drop-off access? Yes

Will you oppose the SAVE Act or any federal legislation that imposes voter ID requirements that would disproportionately burden Alaska Native voters in rural and remote communities? Yes

Short Answer:

Please explain your position on the SAVE Act and how you believe it would affect Alaska voters, particularly those in rural and Tribal communities. I oppose the SAVE Act. It would make voting harder for rural Alaska, when we need to make it easier.

We should all be able to agree that we need secure elections without fraud and abuse, and that every citizen who is eligible to vote can do so easily. Alaska already has voter ID laws that I support, and any changes that are made at the federal level have to work for rural communities.

It's unacceptable that in some rural communities, the polling place never opens on Election Day. We need to ensure there is enough planning, staffing, and contingencies to make sure every Alaskan can vote in their community.

A reliable mail service is essential to ensure equal access to voting in Alaska. How will you use your oversight authority to improve the United States Postal Service to ensure that all Alaskans can fully participate in elections? Mail is so important for rural communities in our state. It is how many in our communities vote, receive their medications, pay their bills, and stay in contact with loved ones.

I would use oversight to ensure the Postal Service standards are written for Alaska rather than for the road system. No ballot should be lost in the mail, and I support counting ballots postmarked by Election Day.

How would you describe the importance of voting and civic engagement to our youth and new voters, especially within Alaska Native communities? I spent 25 years in Alaska schools, and I taught a lot of kids who had never seen anyone from their village in a position of authority. I want young Alaska Native people to know that the decisions made in Washington are not something happening to somebody else: they affect whether there are fish in the river, whether your school stays open, whether your community has housing, and whether you can afford to come home and build a life. Your voice belongs in those decisions. Alaska has one House seat, our races are decided by small margins, and a few hundred votes can decide a statewide election.

If we want more people to feel motivated to show up and vote, we also need to improve trust that the system works for them. Alaskans should feel confident that they are choosing their elected leaders, not billionaires or corporate PACs and not foreign governments. That means we need to end Citizens United, and get big money out of politics.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Yes or No questions:

Will you oppose legislation that weakens or rolls back protections under the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act? Yes

Will you support increasing federal appropriations for programs that reduce energy costs in rural Alaska, including LIHEAP and Tribal energy programs? Yes

Will you oppose legislation that exempts federal infrastructure, mining, oil and gas, or other resource development projects from meaningful Tribal consultation and environmental review? Yes

Will you support legislation and appropriations that increase funding for climate resilience, erosion prevention, and community relocation for Alaska communities facing climate-related threats? Yes

Short Answer:

What federal investments would you prioritize to reduce energy costs in rural Alaska? In Naknek where I live, a gallon of gas costs nearly $9 a gallon, and smaller communities in my region are paying $15 a gallon for heating fuel. Fuel prices are at a crisis level, especially in rural Alaska. Lowering prices starts with putting an end to the tariffs and war in Iran that are jacking up our costs. Fuel costs have gone up 50% since Nick Begich took office. It didn't have to be this way.

For long-term energy cost savings, we need to invest in projects here at home and make sure that Alaska reaps the rewards of being an energy-producing state. I support continued development of our oil and gas, including building the natural gas line, as well as investment in hydro, geothermal, wind, and solar to bring down energy costs for Alaskans. There were new renewable energy projects that were coming to Alaska that have been canceled because of Nick Begich's vote to repeal the tax incentives that made them feasible. I would ensure that LIHEAP and Tribal energy funds are adequately funded.

What specific actions will you take to address environmental and climate-related impacts in Alaska? We need a proactive approach when it comes to climate change. Alaska is on the front lines of these changes, and communities are seeing flooding, erosion, wildfires, landslides and permafrost thaw. We saw it in the damage from Typhoon Halong in Southwest Alaska, and hundreds of residents of Kipnuk and Kwigillingok are still displaced.

I would fight for a dedicated federal resilience package for Alaska covering relocation, seawalls, elevated infrastructure, landslide monitoring and flood control, and I would cut the red tape communities fight through to get it. I have been on the other side of a federal disaster payment and waited more than a year for it to come through. When Alaskans face a disaster they need immediate support.

What specific actions will you take to protect LIHEAP from federal budget cuts and ensure stable predictable funding for Alaska's heating assistance program? I want to expand LIHEAP. I would push for advance appropriations so LIHEAP is funded a year ahead.

If Congress considers legislation that would weaken environmental protections or reduce Tribal consultation requirements, how would you evaluate and vote on those proposals? I would vote no. I support strong, science-based permitting, rigorous environmental review and meaningful tribal consultation before projects move forward. If a project cannot protect key habitat or threatens customary and traditional use, it should not proceed as proposed.

EDUCATION

Yes or No questions:

Will you support full funding of the Johnson O'Malley (JOM) program, which provides supplemental support for Alaska Native students in public schools? Yes

Will you support full funding of Title VI Indian Education grants, which directly support Alaska Native students in public school systems? Yes

Will you oppose any federal cuts to Impact Aid funding, which supports rural Alaska school districts serving Alaska Native students? Yes

Short Answer:

Recruiting and retaining qualified teachers, especially in rural and remote communities, has long been a challenge in Alaska, contributing to gaps in education quality and student outcomes. What specific strategies and policies would you implement to address these challenges, improve teacher retention, and ensure that all students, particularly in rural areas, have access to high-quality educators? This is something I worked on as a Superintendent, with some success! We partnered with the University of Alaska to create an accrediting system that gave teachers credits for spending time investing in the rural communities they were teaching in, participating in cultural events, etc. Because we all know that even though these teachers are coming to teach our kids, they have a lot to learn about our culture and communities. This program not only helped educate these teachers, it also made them feel more connected to the community. As a result, we saw higher retention rates for our teachers.

In Congress, I'd scale that approach by investing in teacher housing, loan repayment, grow-your-own programs, and partnerships that help rural Alaskans become teachers in their own communities. Ultimately, my dream is that we can grow our own – and have members of our communities return to teach. I will support programs that invest in that workforce development.

What measures will you take to expand access to early childhood education programs for Alaska Native children? I support public investment so every child has access to high-quality pre-K and kindergarten, and I would increase funding for Head Start and Early Head Start, which in many rural communities is the only early childhood program that exists.

For Alaska Native children specifically, these programs should be culturally grounded and language-inclusive, and tribes and Native organizations should be able to run them directly rather than through the state.

How do you plan to expand vocational and technical training programs that align with the economic needs of Alaska Native communities? As superintendent of the Bristol Bay Borough School District, I worked with neighboring districts to build the Bristol Bay Regional Career and Technical Education program. The college path is not the best option for everyone. That program is still going, and it has connected students from hub communities and villages with jobs in the trades that let them earn a good living and stay home.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Yes or No questions:

Will you lead and support efforts to increase sustainable federal funding to support Tribal Justice Programs including Tribal Courts, Tribal Police, and investigative resources? Yes

Will you work with federal, state and tribal law enforcement agencies to coordinate in reporting, investigations and sharing data? Yes

Will you support up to date relevant training, wellness support, pay equity, and benefits to help remedy staffing shortages and high turnover for tribal and village law enforcement? Yes

Short Answer:

How will you work to ensure that every Alaskan community has a full-time (or otherwise adequate) public safety presence? There are few other places in the country where the public safety disparity that exists in rural Alaska would be tolerated. It's unacceptable. And it requires active investment from the federal government. I would prioritize funding for public safety personnel to increase the number of officers in the rural communities that need them. I would also support efforts to empower tribes to take ownership over this problem. We know that our public safety issues are connected to a whole host of other cultural, health, and economic challenges. Like the innovative work that is happening through the Tribal Health system, we need a similar tribally-led approach to rural public safety.

In VAWA 2022, Congress recognized the inherent authority of Alaska Native Tribes to exercise criminal and civil jurisdiction over all Indians present in their Villages. Do you support incorporating the definition of 'Village' from VAWA 2022 into all public safety statutes, regulations, policies, and implementation strategies? Yes. Alaska Native Villages have inherent authority over their own communities.

The Alaska Federation of Natives has called on the Department of the Interior to provide dedicated annual non-competitive base funding for P.L. 280 Tribes to develop and sustain tribal court systems and support public safety services. Do you support this initiative, and how would you work to ensure that funding meets the budgetary needs of Tribes in Alaska? Yes, I support it. We need dedicated annual non-competitive base funding to support tribal court systems. I would work with AFN and tribal leaders on what they need and fight for these funds through the annual appropriations process.

Alaska has some of the highest rates of missing and murdered Indigenous people in the Nation. The Not Invisible Act Commission was established in 2020, and their report Not One More was released in November 2023 with many recommendations specific to Alaska. This report has now been deleted from the DOJ website, cases continue to remain unsolved, and Alaska Native people continue to experience high rates of violence and murder. What are your solutions to address the MMIP crisis? First, we need to put the Not One More report back up. Deleting a federal report does not make the findings go away. I would demand it be restored and require Justice and Interior to report on which recommendations they have acted on. Those Alaska-specific recommendations should be implemented immediately. Let's establish reliable funding for Tribal public safety initiatives and establish dedicated MMIP response teams in hub communities.

Families should be treated as partners in these investigations. Too many Alaska Native families have spent years being told to wait. I will meet with them, and I will keep meeting with them and champion getting them the justice they deserve

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Yes or No questions:

Will you support the 29 recommendations from the Commission on Native Children Report that would improve outcomes for Native children and youth in four main areas, including education and job training, physical, mental and behavioral health, child welfare and juvenile justice. Yes

Affordable housing is in critically short supply, contributing to various social challenges. Funding under the Native American Housing and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) is the main source of federal assistance to provide safe, accessible, and affordable housing to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. Do you support reauthorizing and adequately funding NAHASDA? Yes

Will you advocate for inflation-proofing NAHASDA funds to ensure long-term stability for tribal housing programs? Yes

Short Answer:

Chronic diseases such as diabetes and respiratory illness disproportionately affect Alaska Native communities, and the Indian Health Service has historically been underfunded. What steps will you take to ensure that IHS receives adequate funding to address these health disparities and meet the healthcare needs of Alaska Natives? I would fight for advance appropriations for the Indian Health Service, and ultimately for mandatory funding. Congress took an important step by providing advance appropriations for IHS, but Tribal health care should not remain subject to the uncertainty of the annual discretionary appropriations process. I support moving toward full mandatory funding.

I would protect our tribal health system's ability to run its own care, because our tribal health organizations built something that works. I would expand loan repayment and housing support to recruit and keep providers in rural clinics, invest in the community health aide program, and fund

the water and sanitation infrastructure driving so much of the respiratory and infectious disease burden here. Over 3,000 homes across 32 villages still lack running water and a flush toilet.

I would also protect Medicaid, which a large share of the tribal health system depends on.

What strategies will you employ to increase access to comprehensive substance abuse treatment programs in rural areas, and how will you ensure that mental health services are integrated into these efforts to support long-term recovery and community wellness? Alaska has one of the highest suicide rates in the country and our mental health and addiction treatment services have been hollowed out by our current government. I would support regional and village-based treatment capacity, expand the behavioral health aide and community health aide programs, and invest in telehealth where broadband allows.

I would protect Medicaid, which states like ours use to fund critical treatment, and expand its use for addiction treatment.

Alaska Native communities are facing a severe drug crisis, including the impacts of heroin, meth, and fentanyl. How would you advocate for ongoing efforts to protect and enhance Alaska Native communities in combating this crisis? Alaska has the second highest rate of fentanyl overdose deaths in the country. This is unacceptable and Congress needs to act immediately.

We need to stop these drugs from coming into our state and country, and that means we need a strong, secure border and real anti-trafficking resources. We also need to invest in treatment capacity.

But let's recognize that the drug epidemic in our rural communities does not come from us, or our cultures. Our cultures are our strength, and a critical part of the solution to the behavioral health epidemic. That means taking a wider view than simply DEA enforcement, and making sure Tribes and tribal nonprofits are at the table when designing solutions.

OFFICE SOUGHT: U.S. HOUSE

JIM MCDERMOTT, M.S.

As a writer at Jimmy Irish LLC, I bring expertise in business administration, analytical skills, and inventory control to craft compelling stories that resonate with readers. My recent work, “Jimmy’s Merry Mischief,” showcases a heartwarming narrative inspired by true events, blending meaningful life lessons with engaging storytelling.

With prior experience as a small business coach and training specialist, I have supported teams and individuals in achieving their goals through mentorship and skill-building. My work is driven by a commitment to fostering growth, empowering others, and creating impactful content that informs and inspires.

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

JIM MCDERMOTT, M.S.

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Name / Office Sought / Political Party / Email / Campaign Website

Jim McDermott, M.S. / Candidate for U.S. House / Not Provided / Not Provided / Not Provided

SUBSISTENCE & FISHERIES

Yes or No questions:

Will you support meaningful government-to-government Tribal consultation before federal actions affecting Tribal Lands, resources, and communities? YES

Would you support amending ANCSA to authorize Alaska Native management of fish and wildlife on all Native Corporation-owned lands in Alaska? YES

Do you support expanding Tribal co-management of fish and wildlife resources? YES

Do you support prioritizing local subsistence needs over commercial harvest during periods of shortage? YES

Short Answer:

How would you support the development and implementation of a Native-led management framework to ensure Alaska Native communities have a stronger role in managing their subsistence resources? Answer: Again, we would need all the parties to discuss this issue further. Communication is essential to good policies. Where I can, I will gladly insert myself and have an open bias where I support Native-led management.

What is your perspective on the current dual (federal-state) management system for subsistence hunting and fishing in Alaska? Do you believe it adequately serves Alaska Native communities? Answer: Yes, it's a 50/50 between the SOA and Federal issue can be fixed with a little relationship building between all the parties, there must be a way to work this out and I would be glad to advocate for our AK native communities and their leaders to have a positive outcome. Obviously, there's a strong case for pro federal management policies, but the SOA policies have been shaped after the "1989: The Alaska Supreme Court ruled in McDowell v. State of Alaska". We will need to all talk on this issue together and I will make it happen.

Would you advocate for amendments to federal laws such as ANILCA, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and the Marine Mammal Protection Act to ensure consultation with Alaska Native Tribes, Corporations, and organizations; establish co-management standards; and increase funding to support these efforts? Answer: Yes, I support well thought out amendments and increased funding concerning the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Magnuson–Stevens Act (MSA), Marine Mammal Protection Act.

What actions would you take to limit bycatch by commercial trawlers in federal waters and to improve coordination amongst state and federal agencies on salmon recovery efforts? Answer: I fully support "Senator Dan Sullivan's Bycatch Reduction Act advanced out of the U.S. Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee by a 22-4 vote on September 16, 2026, aiming to limit trawl gear contact with the seafloor and reduce bycatch of salmon, halibut, and other species in Alaska's federal waters" ~Alaska Public Media; Additionally, as your advocate I will protect our Alaskan waters against corporate overfishing our waters.

VOTING & REPRESENTATION

Yes or No questions:

Do you support increased federal funding to improve voting access in rural and Tribal communities? Yes

Will you support meaningful Tribal consultation before advancing federal election legislation? YES

Will you support the Native American Voting Rights Act to establish explicit federal protections for tribal ID acceptance, enhance voter registration sights, and equitable ballot drop off access? I would support fair voting policies that address our Alaskan Native voter's needs

Will you oppose the SAVE Act or any federal legislation that imposes voter ID requirements that would disproportionately burden Alaska Native voters in rural and remote communities? I would support fair voting policies that address our Alaskan Native voter's needs

Short Answer:

Please explain your position on the SAVE Act and how you believe it would affect Alaska voters, particularly those in rural and Tribal communities. Answer: I am advocate for election integrity.

A reliable mail service is essential to ensure equal access to voting in Alaska. How will you use your oversight authority to improve the United States Postal Service to ensure that all Alaskans can fully participate in elections? Answer: I believe that every vote counts and my goal is to hold the Postal Service feet to the fire to ensure speedy and documented accounting of every vote coming out of beautiful Alaskan Native communities.

How would you describe the importance of voting and civic engagement to our youth and new voters, especially within Alaska Native communities? Answer: When I was teaching at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, I had the privilege to teach an entrepreneurship class for the Rural Alaska Honors Institute (RAHI). These Alaskan students were sharp and an absolute joy to teach. My point is that we ought to as leaders within our AK Native communities engage our students on the value to understand the importance and value to their communities by being active in voting. Have the students reach out to me and I will gladly engage them.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Yes or No questions:

Will you oppose legislation that weakens or rolls back protections under the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act? Yes

Will you support increasing federal appropriations for programs that reduce energy costs in rural Alaska, including LIHEAP and Tribal energy programs? Yes

Will you oppose legislation that exempts federal infrastructure, mining, oil and gas, or other resource development projects from meaningful Tribal consultation and environmental review? Yes

Will you support legislation and appropriations that increase funding for climate resilience, erosion prevention, and community relocation for Alaska communities facing climate-related threats? Yes

Short Answer:

What federal investments would you prioritize to reduce energy costs in rural Alaska? Answer: Ensure a robust Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

What specific actions will you take to address environmental and climate-related impacts in Alaska? Answer: I will work with the science specialist, SOA, and AK local community leaders for proactive and post policies to help our AK communities affective by events like costal erosion, flooding, costal storms, etc....

What specific actions will you take to protect LIHEAP from federal budget cuts and ensure stable predictable funding for Alaska's heating assistance program? Answer: I am pro Alaskans and I will do my best to ensure our brothers and sister in the lower economics of rural Alaska continue to receive help in the form of LIHEAP.

If Congress considers legislation that would weaken environmental protections or reduce Tribal consultation requirements, how would you evaluate and vote on those proposals? Answer: As a former university teacher, I am well verse in research and presenting strong arguments that are

pro Alaskans. My votes will be well educated thought out and my focus will be on our AK people concerning the above reference to proposals.

EDUCATION

Yes or No questions:

Will you support full funding of the Johnson O'Malley (JOM) program, which provides supplemental support for Alaska Native students in public schools? Yes

Will you support full funding of Title VI Indian Education grants, which directly support Alaska Native students in public school systems? Yes

Will you oppose any federal cuts to Impact Aid funding, which supports rural Alaska school districts serving Alaska Native students? Yes, but that does not count fraud

Short Answer:

Recruiting and retaining qualified teachers, especially in rural and remote communities, has long been a challenge in Alaska, contributing to gaps in education quality and student outcomes. What specific strategies and policies would you implement to address these challenges, improve teacher retention, and ensure that all students, particularly in rural areas, have access to high-quality educators? Answer: As a former educator myself I will support all school of choice options.

What measures will you take to expand access to early childhood education programs for Alaska Native children? Answer: I will fully support early childhood education programs that are results driven.

How do you plan to expand vocational and technical training programs that align with the economic needs of Alaska Native communities? Answer: There is a severe shortage in the job market for individuals with blue collar skills. You will find a champion in DC promoting robust vocation and technical skills being taught to our Alaskan kids throughout Alaska.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Yes and No questions:

Will you lead and support efforts to increase sustainable federal funding to support Tribal Justice Programs including Tribal Courts, Tribal Police, and investigative resources? Yes

Will you work with federal, state and tribal law enforcement agencies to coordinate in reporting, investigations and sharing data? Yes

Will you support up to date relevant training, wellness support, pay equity, and benefits to help remedy staffing shortages and high turnover for tribal and village law enforcement? Yes

Short Answer:

How will you work to ensure that every Alaskan community has a full-time (or otherwise adequate) public safety presence? Answer: Via a robust peace officer training and recruitment programs in place.

In VAWA 2022, Congress recognized the inherent authority of Alaska Native Tribes to exercise criminal and civil jurisdiction over all Indians present in their Villages. Do you support incorporating the definition of 'Village' from VAWA 2022 into all public safety statutes, regulations, policies, and implementation strategies? Answer: If the policies fall in line with the 2022 Biden era Violence Against Women Act, I can see where I could support the expansion of village into all public safety statutes, regulations, policies, and implementation strategies.

The Alaska Federation of Natives has called on the Department of the Interior to provide dedicated annual non-competitive base funding for P.L. 280 Tribes to develop and sustain tribal court systems and support public safety services. Do you support this initiative, and how would you work to ensure that funding meets the budgetary needs of Tribes in Alaska? Answer: It looks to me this has already been well thought out. "Increased Funding: Federal investment has grown over time. After directives to assess tribal court budgetary needs, Congress appropriated funding starting at $10 million, which has since scaled up (such as $21 million in the Fiscal Year 2024 Interior spending bill) to support tribal courts in P.L. 280 states." ~ www.congress.gov

Alaska has some of the highest rates of missing and murdered Indigenous people in the Nation. The Not Invisible Act Commission was established in 2020, and their report Not One More was released in November 2023 with many recommendations specific to Alaska. This report has now been deleted from the DOJ website, cases continue to remain unsolved, and Alaska Native people continue to experience high rates of violence and murder. What are your solutions to address the MMIP crisis? Answer: MMIP crisis needs my attention once I'm in DC and I will fight for our Indigenous people to ensure a feeling of security within their local communities. Please, invite me in to talk with the people once I'm in DC.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Yes or No questions:

Will you support the 29 recommendations from the Commission on Native Children Report that would improve outcomes for Native children and youth in four main areas, including education and job training, physical, mental and behavioral health, child welfare and juvenile justice. Yes

Affordable housing is in critically short supply, contributing to various social challenges. Funding under the Native American Housing and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) is the main source of federal assistance to provide safe, accessible, and affordable housing to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. Do you support reauthorizing and adequately funding NAHASDA? Yes

Will you advocate for inflation-proofing NAHASDA funds to ensure long-term stability for tribal housing programs? Yes

Short Answer:

Chronic diseases such as diabetes and respiratory illness disproportionately affect Alaska Native communities, and the Indian Health Service has historically been underfunded. What steps will you take to ensure that IHS receives adequate funding to address these health disparities and meet the healthcare needs of Alaska Natives? Answer: We live in a rich country and even a richer State, therefore I will work hard to ensure needed health funds are there for our Alaskan Natives.

What strategies will you employ to increase access to comprehensive substance abuse treatment programs in rural areas, and how will you ensure that mental health services are integrated into these efforts to support long-term recovery and community wellness? Answer: I have stated over the last decade plus that we need more mental health facilities and less prisons. My wife is a LCSW and her specialty is behavior health and has been mental health counsellor for decades and with her help we will deliver on this topic!

Alaska Native communities are facing a severe drug crisis, including the impacts of heroin, meth, and fentanyl. How would you advocate for ongoing efforts to protect and enhance Alaska Native communities in combating this crisis? Yes: Drug and alcohol rehab facilities for staff with care and professional staff need to be available in much greater numbers and I will fight for this. Additionally, greater emphasis of bolstering teaching the harm of alcohol and drug abuse in our schools taught via health classes. A start in the right direction, working together, and building a relationship from the AK community to DC will be there when I'm in DC.

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