

# #19

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Page 1: 2018 Candidate Survey

**Q1** What is your name? Which office are you running for and which district do you hope to represent?

Kathryn Dodge, House District 1

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**Q2** 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?

If we hope to create a brighter future for all Alaskans, we need to create an Alaska where women feel safe in their communities and in their homes. I envision an Alaska where we don't bear the shameful distinction of leading the nation in sexual assaults and domestic violence. This starts with education. I'm looking forward to working with the Department of Education and Early Development as they implement Bree's Law, an initiative that will educate students in grades 7-12 about dating violence and abuse with a focus on healthy relationships, prevention and awareness. As a legislator, I will also work to support legislation like HB392, a bill introduced in the 30th Legislature. HB392 sought to establish the Alaska Commission for Women and Girls. In addition to promoting economic, social, legal, and political equality for women and girls in the state, the Commission would also analyze public safety policies and practices to stop violence against women. This would be an excellent first step towards identifying specific steps we can take to address the epidemic of sexual assault and domestic violence in our state.

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**Q3** 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'm familiar with the Interior Alaska Center for Non-Violent Living and many of the programs and services they offer. From their advocacy and support services, to the assistance they offer finding emergency, transitional and permanent supportive housing, to their prevention programs that provide educational and training programs to engage the community in taking an active role in addressing the sexual assault and domestic violence epidemic, IAC does important work in our community to improve the lives of women who have been victimized and change the social norms that allow so many women to be hurt. I had the opportunity to visit with the IAC Executive Director last winter to learn about the challenges and issues their clientele face and the services they offer. I hope to attend a listening session at IAC soon. As a representative I will work to make sure that adequate funding is available to the IAC and organizations like it around the state.

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**Q4** What responsibilities do you believe the Legislature and our elected officials hold in advancing efforts to prevent domestic violence and sexual assault? Would you be willing to maintain or increase the current level of funding for prevention and victims services?

Reducing the rates of sexual assault and domestic violence is a critical part of improving public safety in our state. With the recent debate on how best to reform our criminal justice system, we have an opportunity to focus on how we can provide better mental health services and substance abuse treatment programs, actions that I believe would help to reduce the rates of sexual assault and domestic violence in our state. As a legislator, I would also support funding for prevention efforts to change the norms that make violence so commonplace and victims' services to help the victims of violence cope with the trauma they have experienced.

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**Q5** Alaska's 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey reports that 1 in 10 Alaskan students had experienced sexual violence (being forced by anyone to do sexual acts) during the past year. Do you feel that sexual assault, sexual abuse, and dating violence prevention education should take place in our schools and in what way would you suggest enhancing efforts to educate Alaska's youth on these important subjects? Who do you think shares this responsibility?

As I said before, I believe that education is an important part of addressing the epidemic of sexual violence in Alaska. Sexual assault, sexual abuse and dating violence education should absolutely be happening in our schools and the implementation of Bree's Law in the coming year is a big step in the right direction. I'm looking forward to working with the Department of Education and Early Development as they begin these education efforts and as a legislator, I will work to make sure that we have good information to measure the effectiveness of these efforts. We all have a responsibility to reduce the rates of sexual violence in Alaska, and our legislature must take the lead in addressing this crisis.

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