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Collector: Email Invitation 1 (Email)
Started: Wednesday, October 10, 2018 10:32:08 AM
Last Modified: Wednesday, October 10, 2018 10:54:32 AM
Time Spent: 00:22:24
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Q1 What is your name? Which office are you running for and which district do you hope to represent?

Eileen Patterson for State House Representative District 11

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?

I'm not an expert of the evidence-based practices and policies that reduce sexual assault, but I do believe in consent education beginning in elementary school. What I would do is listen to local experts and groups, like No-More MatSu, and advocate for data-driven policies as well as seeking state lab certifications to allow us to test our own rape kits.

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?

Yes, and not, not yet. My friend Nikki Henry is on the Alaska Family Services board and is arranging a tour of the women's shelter here in Palmer. I'm looking forward to learning exactly how I can help these groups and services more effectively reach their goals.

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?

It's a public safety and human rights issue - it absolutely falls within the responsibility of the legislature to make sure our laws and policies are the best they can be to increase safety and reduce violations to rights. I would be UNWILLING to cut spending and am a strong advocate for increasing funding and incentives for prevention-based strategies.

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?

I know education is a critical piece of the puzzle and support starting with age-appropriate (such as "okay/not okay" touch) curriculum in elementary school. Bree's Law was a bold citizen initiative that I support and I would continue to support grassroots ideas and strategies that could empower Alaskans and keep us all healthier. This is a shared responsibility among all of Alaska's citizens - we all have a part to play!
