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

Andrew Louis (Andy) Josephson; Alaska State House 17

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?

First, I opposed Senate Bill 91. Senate Bill 91 purported to make no changes to domestic violence laws. It failed. It only treats AS 11.41 (crimes against a person) as worth treating seriously. What about other AS 18.66 crimes? It doesn't care about those. This angers me. It needs fixing--badly.

Second, I believe we need to think expansively. What is it that the Department of Law (DAs) might possibly need to do their work effectively? What DV shelters, treatment programs, social workers, and pre-trial services officers, might we wish we had? I think we need to shoot for the stars.

Third, I also think that we need to do more on the "front end". Are we offering the Pre-K programs we should be offering? Are we providing for Alaskans' physical and mental well-being? Are we helping families be their best by offering paid paternity or maternity leave? All of these things factor into our problems with sexual assault and DV.

Fourth and finally, alcohol is undoubtedly a very serious contributor. We need to do more in that area, too.

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 have visited the AWAIC Shelter, yes. I want you to know something. I twice offered an amendment that said this: bringing a firearm into a DV shelter should remain a B Misdemeanor, up to 90 days in jail. But, under Senate Bill 91 it was reduced to just 10 days. Twice, I said this was an outrage! Twice, I said it should remain 90 days and offered amendments to return it to 90 days. The last time (November, 2017), my amendment failed 20-20. So, so unfortunate.

Again, we get what we pay for. I believe that with a comprehensive fiscal plan we could begin to fund programs adequately and provide grants to DV programs that have undoubtedly been cut back.

Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (ANDVSA)

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?

I believe the Legislature has an extensive role relative to curbing domestic violence and sexual assault. This is done by enforcing our laws (appropriating enough money to the prosecutors to do their work effectively), and by having sufficient law enforcement personnel to do their job, too. Further, reductions in these crimes will require the sort governmental programs to have real social impact, as described above (pre-K, healthcare, maternity leave, etc.). I would support any well-founded and reasonable request for increments in the appropriate budgets for these programs.

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 supported both Eryn's Law and Bree's Law. These are important first steps. I believe all citizens have a shared role in promoting and encouraging non-violent behavior. I think we also need to reward courage. Unfortunately, recent events in Washington, D.C. have run counter to these healthy incentives.
