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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?

Mark Begich and Debra Call, Governor and Lt. Governor

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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?

Alaska is experiencing an epidemic of domestic violence and sexual assault, with the highest rates of rape in the country. Women in Alaska are murdered at three times the national average. And the statistics are even worse for Alaska Native women - while they represent less than 10% of the state's population, Alaska Native women account for almost half of the victims of felony sex offenses last year. In Western Alaska, felony sex offenses are more than double the statewide average. This isn't just unacceptable, it's an outrage.

The first step toward reducing domestic violence and sexual assault (DVSA) is ensuring that victims have emergency services that allow them to immediately get out of a dangerous environment and longer-term services to ensure they don't feel forced to return to their abuser. We need to invest more in women's shelters, survivor support, and advocacy so that women experiencing DVSA know there is help out there for them, right away.

A fundamental challenge to tackling this problem, especially in rural Alaska, is the current lack of law enforcement resources to investigate and bring perpetrators to justice. Every DVSA survivor must be protected and receive justice. We are committed to increasing the number of troopers, village public safety officers, and village police officers, in addition to increased revenue sharing that communities use to hire local police. We must also review our sentencing guidelines for DVSA crimes to make sure loopholes are closed and offenders are punished harshly.

A substantial amount of DVSA is linked to the perpetrator's drug and alcohol abuse - and we know that Alaska is currently on the front lines of the opioid epidemic. As such, we must increase our investment in treatment and rehabilitation to bring Alaskans suffering addiction the immediate care they need to get them back on track.

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## Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (ANDVSA)

**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?

We are familiar with the services that women's shelters provide across the state, including AWAIC in Anchorage, TWC in Bethel, AWARE in Juneau, and many more. We have both visited DVSA shelters and victims services programs as we have traveled across the state, which have provided invaluable learning and listening opportunities.

Our plan to support these programs is simple: we will actually support them with resources, not just rhetoric. That begins with recognizing that Alaska doesn't just have a problem, we have a crisis. We must treat the epidemic of DVSA as the emergency that it is, with greater investment in public safety, survivor services, and prevention, as well as expanded partnerships with survivor advocacy and support organizations. We must broaden the consultative process between law enforcement, social services, and the nonprofit sector to ensure best practices when it comes to investigating DVSA, prosecuting perpetrators, and supporting survivors.

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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?

Our elected officials are responsible for ensuring that effective resources and programs are in place to make sure women and girls are protected and that any perpetrator of DVSA is swiftly and properly brought to justice. These resources and programs span the spectrum from law enforcement to investigations, from prosecution to sentencing, with an emphasis on support for the survivor throughout.

We will increase funding for prevention and survivors' services and are committed to improving the delivery and quality of those services wherever possible.

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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?

We absolutely believe that DVSA prevention education should take place in our schools, where young people can be taught to identify the warnings signs of abuse. Peer to peer intervention among youth can be highly effective, and educating students about the dangers of DVSA and empowering them to intervene responsibly offers a promising approach to protecting our children.

Students should be exposed to a range of perspectives to better understand the trauma survivors suffer, what their options are as witnesses to DVSA, and how the legal system operates in these cases. It's important to explain the process and educate young people on the steps they can take to protect their peers will help mitigate the problem. Lawmakers, educators, parents, friends - we all must do everything in our power to protect Alaskans from DVSA.