



2024 DEMOCRATIC PARTY

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Preamble

The Alaska Democratic Party, through its candidates for elected office, seeks to govern responsibly for the benefit of all Alaskans. In governing, we are guided by certain shared values that are the foundation of our party; the policies we champion in this platform are grounded in these shared values:

- **Empathy:** We believe that we and our leadership must express empathy to others. Empathy is expressed as compassion, kindness, and generosity.
- **Truth:** We commit ourselves to truth, integrity, honesty and accountability, as individuals, in our actions as a Party, and in how we govern.
- **Equity:** Equity is expressed in fairness, justice, democracy, intentional inclusiveness, equal opportunity for all, human dignity, diversity, and respect.
- **Service:** Our purpose as Democrats is to serve the public. As members of the party and as elected officials, our service is shown by our work ethic, productivity, and humility.
- **Progress:** We believe in human progress to make a better world. Opportunity, economic development, science, technology, and social development are part of our mission to create a better world for all people.
- **Responsibility:** We resolve to leave a better world for those who follow us. We must pursue policies that ensure our resources – human, natural, financial – are managed for the sake of benefiting both current and future generations.
- **Ethics:** Our personal conduct should express the values listed above. We challenge ourselves to achieve even more than those who went before, and leave a legacy of a more just, equitable, and successful society.

This is who we are. This is why we come together as Democrats.

Part One - Principles of Governance

Constitutional Rights

Good government is essential to the achievement of our joint and individual goals. In governing, we support all the rights guaranteed in the United States and Alaska constitutions. We are heirs to over 200 years of reasoned expansion of those rights under the Bill of Rights, the Equal Protection Clause, and other constitutional provisions woven into the fabric of our democratic system of self-governance. However, these rights, including equality before the law regardless of ethnicity, creed, color, religion, nationality, gender, age, disability, or sexual orientation, face constant challenges. We commit ourselves to defending these rights and extending their reach to more truly achieve a “more perfect union” based on liberty and justice for all.

Privacy

We support Alaskans' rights to privacy, confidentiality, and freedom of choice, including religion, reproduction, medical care, and life partners.

Accountable Leadership

We insist on open, honest, transparent, and accountable public officials in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, and in local government. We are committed to a vigilant effort to expose corruption wherever it exists. We hold our public servants to the highest standard of integrity and accountability in all levels of government. We support measures to ensure all state employees, including state officials, adhere to high standards of conduct and are held accountable for sexual harassment and other forms of sexual misconduct. We must require that they serve the public interest, and govern in an open, transparent, inclusive, and respectful way. Our leaders must promote public participation and easy access to government proceedings.

Alaska's Judiciary

We reaffirm our belief in a strong, fair and independent judiciary, free from partisan influence. We oppose any efforts to fundamentally alter Alaska's system of merit-based selection and retention of judges.

Conflict of Interest

We expect all state officers and employees, whether elected or appointed, to strictly adhere to their respective branch's standards of conduct and prohibitions on conflicts of interest. Alaska Statutes chapters 22.20, 24.60, and 39.52. Similarly, we expect all contractors employed by the State to disclose all potential conflicts of interest to the contracting authority for appropriate action. Finally, we urge a change to legislative rules for the Alaska Senate and House so that any legislator who requests to be recused because of a conflict of interest on a matter pending before the respective body be required to do so even over the objection of other members of the body.

Constitutional Convention

We support the fundamental structure and allocation of powers and duties embodied in our state constitution. We oppose efforts to fundamentally revise the constitution and view with concern the decennial question, "Shall there be a Constitutional Convention?". Should it be approved, we can expect proposals to elect the judiciary or strengthen the governor's ability to make appointments, define the beginning of life, authorize public funding for private schools, and much else.

Part Two - Suffrage and Elections

Voting Process

We support a voting process that facilitates the greatest amount of participation from all Alaska voters while remaining transparent in its organization, and verifiable and accountable to all of its citizens. We support counting all ballots, including military, absentee, and early. We support automatic voter registration, open primaries, and ranked choice voting for all state elections. We propose forming an election taskforce to identify best practice election policies and to offer accurate and new forms of education on the voting process.

Mail in Voting

We believe the Division of Elections should establish no-excuse mail-in voting for all registered voters. Mail-in voting should be available for all Alaskans and other Americans, as risks to health and welfare from voting should always be minimized in order to maximize participation in the democratic process. No one should have to choose between their health, safety, or livelihood and their right to vote.

Voting Rights

We must restore the full protections of the Voting Rights Act, to ensure that all elections for federal and state offices nationwide are conducted uniformly and in a manner that ensures that no one who is of legal voting age is disenfranchised from voting or is prevented from voting expeditiously. We are united as a nation, so unfairness anywhere impairs the function of our whole system of representation and democracy.

Disenfranchisement of U.S. Citizens Serving Time in Prison

We believe that citizens who are incarcerated should have the right to vote. We support legislation that would remove current bars to voting and we encourage the participation of everyone in political and electoral processes.

Election Integrity

We are committed to ensuring the integrity of our elections and the rest of our political process. To achieve this goal, we will ensure adequate funding, staffing, and oversight of efforts to: (1) identify and assess threats to that integrity, and (2) design and implement effective responses to identified threats. Cybersecurity must be a priority for our government at the local, state, and national level. Attempts to influence elections

must be taken seriously and addressed swiftly to ensure the safety of our democracy; however, those efforts must always prioritize voting rights and participation. All registered voters must be notified immediately if their names are stricken from the registration rolls so that corrective action can be taken.

Redistricting

We oppose partisan gerrymandering of federal, state, and local election districts. We support efforts to create objective measures, such as mathematical tests, that courts can use to review the drawing of election districts, in addition to other relevant evidence.

Campaign Finance Reform

The decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* and *McCutcheon v. FEC* have had a disastrous effect on funding political campaigns for elected office. These decisions opened the floodgates to unlimited, unregulated funding of super PACs, driving the cost of political campaigns to astronomical and unacceptable levels, and undermining the integrity of our democracy. As it pertains to campaigns, we believe that corporations are not people and that money is not speech.

Further eroding safeguards against 'unlimited funding of political campaigns in Alaska, in 2021 the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals struck down Alaska's \$500 limit on individual contributions to political candidates for state and local office. The legislature has failed to reinstate any limits. We strongly support legislation, whether through initiative or legislative action that restores reasonable limits and evens the playing field.

We insist on achieving a system of fair, publicly financed political campaigns. We support requiring regular primetime public debates between all qualified candidates. Publicly funded media time should be equally distributed between all qualifying candidates and should substantially replace the current, primarily privately financed campaign system which seems to undermine our democracy. We support a constitutional amendment to overturn the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United*. Specifically, we believe that legislative bodies should be fully empowered to regulate campaign finance, including participants, timing, contribution and expenditure limits, reporting, and consequences for violations. The corrosive effects of *Citizens United*, *McCutcheon*, and other similar cases must be minimized whenever possible through legislative or administrative means while all efforts to amend the Constitution or overturn the cases proceed.

Part Three - Environment, Natural Resources, and Energy

Introduction

Alaska's relatively intact ecosystems and abundant natural resources sustain our families, communities, and cultures. They support our unique quality of life and important aspects of our economy including subsistence and tourism. It is therefore vital that our state and federal governments enact policies that protect clean air, clean water, and sensitive lands and natural resources for current and future generations. We support prioritizing open spaces, trails, and recreational opportunities.

The Alaska Constitution requires that the State manage our natural resources for the maximum benefit of the people on a sustainable basis. Alaskans should control the use and development of public lands and be able to influence decisions about private lands to protect the shared environment. For that reason, Alaskans must be granted reasonable and easy access to relevant information in a timely manner. We support rigorous public dialogue about activities that impact Alaska's environment. We recognize the importance of environmental reviews of proposed actions that affect our environment by objective, qualified scientific professionals as they conduct sound environmental and cultural analyses of such projects.

Environment

Because Alaska's quality of life and robust economy depend on our natural environment, clean air, and clean water it is critical that we eliminate or minimize all forms of pollution through:

- green technologies and infrastructure
- energy efficiency in buildings and transportation
- waste reduction, especially single-use plastics
- recycling that truly achieves a circular economy for the materials involved
- proper management and cleanup of hazardous and solid waste
- strict enforcement of environmental laws

In an effort to enact measures to protect the land and water of Alaska and the Earth, we support legislation limiting the sale and production of single use plastics and support the search for environmentally safe alternatives.

We support the protection of Bristol Bay watersheds and oppose the proposed Pebble mine given the danger it poses to the world's greatest wild salmon fishery.

We support protection of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge coastal plain and oppose oil and gas exploration, leasing, and development as it jeopardizes the human rights of the Gwich'in Nation who depend on the health of the Porcupine caribou herd and its habitats for their subsistence and cultural survival. In addition, the coastal plain is a critical, intact ecosystem supporting polar bears, hundreds of species of birds, and other wildlife.

We support enactment and strict enforcement of regulations that protect workers and the environment. This is particularly important for resource extraction industries, which have the potential for significant environmental damage. We support restoration of Alaska's Coastal Zone Management program.

Climate Change

Climate change and ocean acidification are caused by human emissions of greenhouse gasses (GHG), particularly CO₂, and require human solutions. This is an emergency of the highest order that requires immediate, substantial mitigating choices and actions by all levels of government as well as by industry, private entities and individuals.

Climate Change has significant health impacts that are of special concern to Alaskans. The Alaskans most vulnerable to these climate-related changes are those who are most dependent on subsistence foods, the poor, the very young, the elderly, and those with mental and physical health conditions. Alaska Native communities are particularly vulnerable.

The situation is urgent. Alaska is on the frontline of climate impacts, warming 2 to 3 times faster than the global average. 2023 was the hottest year on record. World leaders at COP28 called for a transition away from fossil fuel use.

We support immediate and effective action at the international, national, state and local levels to address the climate emergency. We support the goal of keeping global average temperature less than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, through timely reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

The State of Alaska must make research, mitigation, and adaptation to climate change, and transitioning away from fossil fuels, top priorities when allocating resources to communities, agencies and the University.

We support carbon pricing, implemented at either the state or the federal level, preferably in a revenue-neutral format wherein the funds collected are returned to households as dividends. The price must steadily increase to the point that demand for fossil fuels is strongly suppressed. Carbon pricing is the best way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions because carbon pricing can touch every part of the economy, from electricity to manufacturing to transportation, and because it rewards any behavior that reduces emissions. Rather than regulating exactly where and how emissions should be reduced, carbon pricing gives markets the flexibility to find the cheapest ways to lower emissions.

Energy Policy

Alaska has the opportunity to lead in the development of environmentally responsible energy technologies, efficient use of Alaska's conventional and renewable energy resources, and enhanced energy efficiency and conservation. Alaskans deserve access to affordable, sustainable energy.

Although the Alaska oil and gas industry historically has made, and continues to make, vital contributions to Alaska's economy, the currently advanced state of climate disruption requires that the world transition away from fossil fuel use as soon as possible. "Continuing investments in carbon-intensive activities at scale will heighten the multitude of risks associated with climate change and impede societal and industrial transformation towards low-carbon development. Meeting the long-term temperature objective in the Paris Agreement therefore implies a rapid turn to an accelerating decline of GHG emissions towards 'net zero', which is implausible without urgent and ambitious action." (IPCC 2022)

We support President Biden's commitments and actions to address climate change, including rejoining the Paris Agreement, making the commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, investing in clean energy infrastructure, creating jobs in the clean energy sector, regulating methane emissions, and pausing all pending export permits for liquified natural gas (LNG) until updated criteria that consider the impact of climate change have been adopted.

We support an orderly transition away from fossil fuels, with a transition to renewable energy sources for in-state use as soon as possible

Renewable Energy

We support a rapid transition to renewable energy sources, which are now cheaper than fossil fuels. We support:

- Onshore and offshore wind, solar, geothermal and salmon friendly hydroelectric projects that minimize environmental impacts
- Research and development of renewable energy technologies, which Alaska is particularly well suited to develop, including wave and tidal power and geothermal energy
- Cold climate housing research that results in more design and construction of such housing in Alaska
- A tax credit structure that encourages renewable energy development by small energy companies and Independent Power Producers, particularly in communities and villages off the road system
- Funding for renewable energy including energy storage and transmission across the state
- Fair market compensation of homeowners and businesses who produce and contribute renewable energy to the electric grid.

We call for immediate creation of a roadmap for the development and implementation of renewable energy technologies and programs, to move Alaska toward an efficient, renewable energy-based economy as rapidly and cost effectively as possible.

Fisheries

To maintain our fisheries, we need to protect the habitat of wild salmon stocks and other fish important for subsistence, commercial and sport uses, and protect against overharvest. Bycatch taken by commercial vessels continues to be a growing concern and currently is being addressed with legislation. We recognize that pollution, acidification and warming of the oceans caused by greenhouse gas emissions, riparian development, timber harvest, mining, dams, overharvest, hatcheries, invasive species, dewatering, and other human activities can harm fish and fisheries. We recognize that our ability to restore lost habitat and lost genetically distinct populations is **extremely** limited and extremely expensive, thus any project that threatens wild fish important for subsistence, commercial or sport uses should be avoided. We urge state agencies to

base policies upon the requirement that fish stocks “shall be managed consistent with sustained yield of wild fish stocks” (AS 16.05.730), and upon the Sustainable Salmon Management Policy of the Alaska Board of Fisheries, which addresses these concerns.

To preserve Alaska’s salmon resources for future generations of Alaskans, state statutes should better define salmon habitat; adequately list the state’s salmon-bearing streams; provide “salmon safe” development guidelines; and give Alaska residents adequate opportunity for participation in decisions regarding development that could impact salmon resources. We support the ban on farmed salmon.

Food Security

We support strengthening Alaska’s food security and ensuring all Alaskans have access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food irrespective of class, race, or economic status. An abundance of healthy food and clean water is a basic human right and crucial to the wellbeing of everyone in our state. Food security is a recognition of the fundamental connection between humans (growers, consumers, and subsistence harvesters) and the oceans, lakes, streams, and land in which we coexist.

We face frequent barriers to food distribution throughout Alaska and must build capacity and infrastructure to overcome these challenges.

We support all efforts to maximize the efficiency of food transportation to remote Alaska Communities

We are committed to partnering with local, state, regional, and national partners, including food pantries, farmers, penal institutions, food hubs, farmers’ markets, and Feeding America to achieve these objectives. Investing in our food production, processing, and storage capacity will allow us to greatly increase prosperity across our state.

Part Four - Labor, Health, Education, and Welfare

Jobs

Our economy depends on the development of a ready and well-trained Alaska workforce. Alaska jobs should be filled by Alaskans. We are committed to achieving full employment at a living wage, with all workers enjoying equal employment opportunity and a safe, healthy, harassment-free workplace with unions providing continual

vigilance for safety changes for public employees to ensure the above. A minimum wage of at least \$15.00/hour and paid sick leave are critical to achieving these goals.

Labor

We strongly support the right of every Alaskan to choose to join and/or organize a union, to negotiate and ratify contracts in good faith, and to participate in union activities without fear of reprisal. Negotiated contracts must be honored and enforced free of discrimination. We support the pillars of the labor movement: fair pay and benefits, civil rights, protections against corporate greed, workplace health and safety, gender and racial equality, gender identity, global workers' rights, immigration, apprenticeship opportunities for life-long careers and every Alaskan's right to strike.

We want this to be a state where all Alaskans of every stage of their employment can sustain themselves and their family and we support defined benefit pensions and retirement plans.

Employment Security

We support the passage of the federal Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, which would remove barriers to organizing and bargaining for better wages and benefits.

We believe that so-called "right-to-work" laws are wrong for all workers. We vigorously oppose those laws and other efforts that would eliminate dues check-off procedures, roll-back prevailing wage standards, abolish fair share requirements, restrict the use of voluntary membership payments for political purposes, attack seniority, restrict due process protections, and require annual recertification efforts. We oppose "right-to-work" legislation and lawsuits that would strike down laws protecting the rights of labor unions, teachers, and public employees.

In order to allow employees to remain independent, we believe that employers should be prohibited from requiring workers to attend meetings on political, economic, and religious topics not related to employment.

Childcare

We are committed to ensuring that all families have access to affordable, high-quality childcare, supporting the economic stability of families and fostering the well-being and development of our children.

Health Care

Comprehensive, affordable, quality health care is a fundamental human right. This includes preventative care, dental and vision care, mental and reproductive health services, and substance misuse and addiction care. Alaska's fiscal health is dependent upon the health of its people and their access to affordable health care.

We support:

- Medicaid expansion and reform
- Development and implementation of a single payer system to reduce and control costs
- Community health centers
- Public health services, including access to vaccinations and housing
- Safe, affordable, long-term care
- Holistic healthcare that considers and treats the entirety of a patient's condition and lifestyle and includes the consideration and use of licensed non-traditional healthcare including integrative medicine, culturally and historic medical practices of Alaskans Indigenous populations, chiropractic, naturopathic and acupuncture care
- Scientific, evidence-based responses to pandemic issues
- Continuity of planning to address congressional and financial support for pandemics
- Pandemic preparedness

- Fair and affordable prescription medication in line with the costs of other developed countries

- Available and affordable short and long acting contraceptive options, regardless of health insurance and employment status

- Enactment of death with dignity legislation

- Reinstatement of mandatory vaccinations for public schools and hospitals

We also support confidential, unrestricted access to culturally sensitive health care. This encompasses the full range of reproductive health services including contraception and abortion without requiring guardian, judicial, parental, or spousal consent or notification.

Substance Misuse

Alaska has one of the highest rates of substance misuse disorders in the U.S. These include misuse of and addiction to alcohol, heroin and other opioids, methamphetamine, and other natural or synthetic depressants and stimulants, including “designer” drugs, which often defy regulation. There has been a continuing rise in overdoses and deaths resulting from the addition of synthetic fentanyl to heroin; there has also been a resurgence in the use of crystal meth and cocaine. Legislative policies are needed to address misuse and addiction as medical conditions, not crimes. This does not negate an individual’s responsibility for crimes committed against others or society. Rather, the emphasis must be on treatment, not punishment.

We commit to reduction of harm measures to improve the chance that those who are addicted will live long enough to recover. We support the continuation of needle exchange centers. Inpatient detox and rehab treatment need to be available without long waiting periods. Recommended treatment modalities are those based on scientifically-certified best practice requirements in the field. Peer-support services and counseling, medically assisted treatment, and other proven programs all have a role to play in improving outcomes.

The state Department of Corrections needs adequate treatment availability for incarcerated individuals with substance misuse disorders (currently over 70% of the state prison population).

Individuals experiencing chronic pain should not be deprived of appropriate pain treatment, including the use of opioids, as well as other non-medical treatments, under medical supervision. We recognize that the medical community has a role to play in reducing opioid misuse.

ACES/FASD

People with brain-based differences based on childhood trauma (Adverse Childhood Experiences: ACES), including prenatal exposure to alcohol, are at a significantly higher risk of addiction, imprisonment, suicide, homelessness, victimization, and educational attrition. Current prevention, treatment, education, and justice practices don’t address their particular brain-based differences; they often do not help, and often make things worse for the individual. In addition to intervention and treatment, additional early recognition of individuals with these differences is needed in order to begin early intervention. We support new, innovative, science-based interventions and prevention.

Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary Education

Education represents Alaska’s future and should be a legislative priority. We recognize that education produces strong returns on investment. In addition, we believe

higher education and the pursuit of knowledge are goods in themselves. Alaskans deserve an education system in which every student is engaged and supported to reach their full potential. Alaska's public educational programs should be fully funded with a consistent allocation from the State, adjusted for inflation, and with special support to small and remote community schools and sufficient support for students with special needs. We will protect Alaska's Constitutional language prohibiting use of public funds for religious or other private educational institutions.

We support comprehensive and equitable public education starting with early childhood through college. This includes vocational, career, and apprenticeship programs, and a strong higher education system. We recognize that teachers are critical to our educational system and are committed to providing an array of educational and support services for educators.

We support Pre-K-12 liberal arts, reading, mathematics, science, music, arts, technology and computer science, accurate American, Alaska Native, and world history, social studies that includes world religions and belief systems, civics, literature, languages, nutrition, cultivating and harvesting of food, exercise, and age appropriate information about the human body, self-care and sexual health. In addition, we support trauma-informed environments in all levels of education and workforce development. We support weapons-free learning facilities. We support the right of transgender youth to fully participate in all school sports and other activities.

We advocate for mandatory programs in public schools designed to teach children Pre-K-12, that a person's body, including their own, is theirs and theirs alone. We also advocate for similar programs designed to teach students the importance of consent, inclusion, and equality.

Higher Education

Higher education is a cornerstone to building a diverse economy and it offers vast opportunities to citizens of Alaska. We support fully funding the University of Alaska system to ensure that it will continue to provide a broad menu of educational opportunities to Alaska students, and provide significant research that serves Alaska and our nation. We support publicly funded higher education that is free or affordable for students.

Online Learning

The development of an affordable high bandwidth statewide internet communications infrastructure is critical to support distance learning. We support expansion of high-quality online distance learning education programs. Distance learning offers flexible learning environments that allow people at all stages of their lives

and careers to more easily continue their education and update their knowledge and skills. Life-long learning should be our shared cultural mantra.

Housing

We acknowledge that housing is a fundamental right and a basic need for a thriving society, and that Alaska faces a housing crisis in every corner of the state that is driven by high energy costs, poor construction, high material costs and shipping, causing serious impacts to the health of all residents, and particularly elders and children. We believe everyone deserves a home and commit to working to end homelessness in Alaska. We commit to developing, financing, and effective policy, for sustainable housing solutions that address these issues for adequate, accessible and affordable housing for healthy living. Because it is crucial to affordable housing, delivering public services, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions per housing unit, we support increased equitable housing density and reducing exclusionary zoning practices that reduce housing availability.

Alaska's Seniors

Alaska's seniors are vital to Alaska's health. We support programs that allow seniors to thrive in the state to which their contributions have provided so much to Alaska's growth.

Alaska's Military and Veterans

We believe that the health and welfare of the U.S. military depends on competitive income and better integration of military members and their family into our communities, workforce, and schools.

Alaska's active duty military personnel and veterans are to be recognized and commended for their sacrifice and should be provided with access to highest quality medical and psychological services in regional facilities. Reservist and National Guard members and families have the right to appreciation, support, services, protection of civilian jobs while deployed, and reasonable and compassionate consideration in regard to multiple deployments. We support research and grassroots community discussion of contingency plans in the event of military base closures. We support a smart, predictable defense budget that meets the strategic challenges we face.

Alaska's First Responders

First responders should be provided access to Personal Protective Equipment and the highest quality medical and psychological services for injuries sustained while engaging in first responder activities. We support legislation to protect volunteer first responder civilian jobs while engaging in first responder activities. We support

continuing health care benefits for the spouses of first responders who die in the line of duty.

Part Five - Finance, Taxation and Economic Development

State Fiscal Policy

Alaska must have a comprehensive, long-term fiscal plan that provides for essential government services and infrastructure, includes community revenue sharing, and protects the Alaska Permanent Fund and its dividends. We support multi-faceted measures to address our current fiscal crisis, including ending payment of oil tax credits, and the exploration of new, non-regressive sources of revenue. We oppose closing the state's budget deficit through cutting essential public services. The state government should be able to operate on a continuing basis without imposing austerity measures due to funding shortfalls.

Business

The development and growth of Alaska-owned businesses, cooperatives, and industries are essential to our economy. We support responsible development of our natural and human resources. We promote in-state value-added processing of resources with revenue reinvested in Alaska.

We support new state and federal policy to make small business grants truly available, because current processes are overly complex, and the acceptance guidelines are narrow. This support for small businesses is crucial because Alaska needs to move away from boom-bust business models that deplete local resources until businesses fail for lack of resources. Alaska needs business models that restore as they create.

We promote Alaska Grown, Made in Alaska, Silver Hand, and other products made or sold in Alaska as well as outside markets. We should cut red tape around testing and retail sales of marijuana. Industrial hemp needs to be legally separated from marijuana as it can provide a diverse, small and big business manufacturing base of Alaska grown and Alaska made products. We need realistic ways to expand Alaskan farming, indoor farming and Alaska summer crops.

Investment in Sustainable Industries

Alaska cannot afford to invest preferentially in extractive, boom-and-bust industries. Investing in new, developing and sustainable industries must be a priority for the legislature and governor. Wise choices must be made to ensure Alaska's fate is not tied to the price of oil. The State should promote economic development that delivers benefits primarily to Alaskans. Those benefits should include producing local goods and services and living wage jobs. Alaska should develop industries that produce added value within the state, rather than simply exporting resources. Extractive natural resource industries should be expected to produce legacy businesses, which will continue to provide benefits after the resources are depleted. Extractive natural resource industries should be encouraged to hire and develop the local workforce.

Part Six - Intergovernmental and International Relations

Tribal Sovereignty

We embrace and support the rights of tribal governments and Indigenous Alaskans.

Indigenous Economies

We support Indigenous Alaskans' right to subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering by prioritizing sustainable resource management, investing in supportive infrastructure, incorporating traditional knowledge into conservation efforts, and implementing co-management practices to ensure cultural preservation and community resilience. We also support Alaska Native Tribes and ANCSA corporations' right to pursue economic development opportunities.

Rural Communities

We encourage increased cooperation between the state and tribal governments in the delivery of justice to our rural communities. We respect and support all rural Alaska communities, including preserving their traditional cultural ways of life for current and future generations. We support access to equitable education, communications, clean water, sewer, power, public safety, and health services. We support state recognition of Alaska Native tribal governments and the continued cooperation between state and tribal courts. We support continued development of healthy, vibrant rural communities through the creation of economic opportunity that balances with the subsistence-based economy. Alaska Native villages are among the hardest hit by fossil fuel use and climate change in Alaska. These communities should be empowered with the financial,

technical, legal, and educational resources they need to restore, adapt, monitor, and protect their communities, and the ecosystems they rely upon, now and into the future.

International Relations

We support diplomacy to advance international peace and economic prosperity, backed at all times by a strong national defense capability. We support multinational efforts to stop genocide, eliminate hunger, control disease, protect human rights including political rights, support collective bargaining for living wages and benefits, protect the environment, address climate change, and promote justice, prosperity and peace in the world. We are committed to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. We urge the U.S. Senate to ratify the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*.

Abolition of Nuclear Weapons.

The threat posed by the continued spread of nuclear weapons has become critical. To move us toward a world in which all people can experience meaningful security, we call on like-minded entities to deepen debate and promote ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNM). The Lethal Autonomous Weapons System (LAWS) or “killer robots” should be included in these talks.

International Collaboration on Climate Change.

We support international collaboration that acts effectively on the climate change emergency. We support the position that the State of Alaska must accept, respect, and be advised by the evolving best available science (and scientists who produced it) on the realities of climate change. The State of Alaska must make research, mitigation, and adaptation to climate change a top priority when allocating resources to our universities and government agencies. Human-caused climate change poses an imminent danger to our planet and civilization that demands immediate action on many fronts. We must look to science and the precautionary principle in setting policy priorities and objectives.

Part Seven - Public Safety, Criminal Justice, and Social Justice

Introduction

Alaskans must be secure against crime. We advocate for restorative justice and efforts to reduce recidivism. Victims have the right to seek restitution, including punitive damages. Victims also have the right to participate in the criminal justice process.

Sentences should be fair, just, and prioritize rehabilitation. Zero tolerance and so-called tough-on-crime policies often incarcerate individuals who could be rehabilitated without the need for actual jail time. Many times, these policies put individuals behind bars instead of providing a sentence that reflects the crime. The way to be truly tough on crime is to adopt evidence-based policies to reform the criminal justice system to ensure a responsible issuance of justice that reduces the risk of re-offending.

We are committed to a system of corrections in Alaska that is fully in-state and publicly funded, owned, and operated. We believe that all Alaskans benefit when jails and prisons are non-profit. We also believe that incarcerated individuals from rural villages should serve their sentences as close as possible to their communities. We support basic human dignity for all incarcerated individuals and value reentry programs which increase an individual's abilities to become a productive and successful member of society, rather than return to incarceration.

Criminal Justice Reform

We believe that individuals who have served their sentences and have paid their debts to society should be free from arbitrary discrimination. For those arrested of misdemeanors and some non-violent felonies, we believe that bail schedules should not be so onerous as to coerce guilty pleas or extend jail time for defendants who do not have the ability to pay; we believe that fines should be appropriate to the offense; and that alternative sentencing, such as public service, should be available as an alternative to paying a fine or court fee related to misdemeanors when such alternatives are appropriate to the offense. We support the development and implementation of effective job re-entry programs for criminals who have served their sentences.

Victims of crimes, particularly misuse and rape, should be heard and not shamed. The effort to enforce sex trafficking laws, for example, should recognize sex workers as victims, not criminals, when they report violence to law enforcement; and the focus should be on investigating and prosecuting those who manipulate and take advantage of vulnerable Alaskans. We support all efforts to expedite the processing of the substantial backlog of rape kits.

Civil and Human Rights and Social Justice

We insist upon a criminal justice system that is informed about trauma and emphasizes treatment for all offenders, especially those with behavioral or substance misuse issues. We insist that offenders have access to and a choice in taking research and science-based, alternative health treatments and medications in lieu of a prescription. We also believe that inmates should have the option to refuse medications prescribed to them unless ordered by the court.

Firearms

We support the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees the right of the people to keep and bear arms. We support responsible gun ownership, and policies and programs to reduce gun violence and accidental gun deaths. This policy should include completed background checks for all gun sales, and education on hunting and weapons safety. We support a rational and safe policy for gun-free zones. We support legislative action that would ban the sale to the general public of military assault-style weapons. We support legislation that requires the CDC to collect data on gun related injuries and fatalities. We also support government funded research into gun safety.

Part Eight - Transportation and Infrastructure

Transportation

Alaska's communities must have access to transportation that pertains to their location and needs. We support keeping the Alaska Marine Highway System open year round. Remote communities must be included in statewide and national transportation planning and investment. Transportation systems must be funded adequately. They must be planned, designed, constructed, and maintained to be safe, durable, environmentally responsible, adaptive to climate change and population growth, and where appropriate they must be intermodal and include facilities such as bikeways, tunnels, overhead walkways, wildlife crossings and corridors, and other transportation enhancements that create whole systems. Because Alaska is substantially dependent on federal transportation funds, Alaska must meet federal requirements for such planning, design, construction, and maintenance, including planning for remote communities through the federal Surface Transportation Program, BIA-funded roads, and FAA planning. Alaska should participate in international transportation planning efforts related to Arctic commerce, transportation, and investment."

Infrastructure

We believe that infrastructure includes the planning, construction, and maintenance of physical structures and facilities needed to sustain and support economic development and quality of life for all communities. The primary considerations include:

- acknowledgement and support of Indigenous cultural standards and needs
- community development of education options (public schools, libraries, online learning, work study)
- health
- clean water
- agriculture

- sewage and septic systems and waste treatment facilities
- public works
- communications (telephone and high-speed internet)
- sustainable alternative energy production and transmission
- multi-modal transportation based on geographic and topographic realities

We support dialogue to ensure that new systems can be integrated with existing structures and support transition to advanced technology for construction and implementation.

We appreciate the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) - known as the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” - and all the benefits it brings. We support the creation of a permanent national infrastructure bank capable of providing financing sufficient to meet our future infrastructure needs.

Closing

This platform is the product of efforts by Alaskans from many different Alaskan communities, who brought with them a diversity of lived experience in their attempt to communicate the values and priorities of the Alaska Democratic Party. This platform was offered for a vote at the state convention on May 18, 2024.

“Democrats believe that cooperation is better than conflict, unity is better than division, empowerment is better than resentment, and bridges are better than walls.”

- *The Democratic National Committee, 2020 Democrats.org*