

Name: **Andi Story**

District: **House District 34**

1. The State of Alaska continues to face significant budget challenges, how will you address the State's budget and revenue issues? Please provide details.

A1: Every year this is more critical. As with any budget, our options are to: find efficiencies; make more cuts; draw from savings; borrow money; and increase revenues. Keep in mind we've been cutting the state budget for several years now and we are in the middle of a pandemic, after a slow recovery from a three year recession. It is critical to balance and stabilize the budget in order to sustain our economy. There are four principals I will stick to in resolving the deficit: Protect the Permanent Fund (our biggest source of revenue at 3 billion, and to not go over the sustainable draw, as for every 1 billion over the draw, we lose 50 million in interest earnings now and in future earnings) and protect a dividend for future generations (must have an honest discussion on what we can afford to pay); seek savings while sustaining essential services in areas like education, transportation, health, and public safety (for example I believe savings can be found in energy and health care expenditures); keep an open mind on all revenue sources. It will take a team effort, to pass new revenues. We have an outdated tax structure (such as our fuel tax, lowest in the nation at .08 cents a gallon), we can maximize use of federal receipts, and there are some creative solutions out there, and we have bonding capacity. I support asking voters to support general obligation bonds to repair and build infrastructure and put people to work.

2. In 2017, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) ranked Alaska as having a C- with respect to the condition our state's infrastructure – see following link: <https://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/state-item/alaska/> Do you support taxes and user fees, such as increased gas taxes, to help provide funding for these needs? If not, do you have another plan for maintaining our road system?

A2: Yes.

3. Alaska is eligible for federal funds through the Lands and Water Conservation Fund for design and development of parks and cultural facilities. See following link: https://omb.alaska.gov/ombfiles/21_budget/DNR/Proposed/2021proj32552.pdf Do you support the state receiving these funds? If not, why?

A3: Yes.

4a. The University of Alaska (UA) system has faced severe budget reductions over the past several years. Do you support current funding levels, further decreases, or efforts to

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reestablish funding that has been cut in recent years? If increases, where do you see that funding coming from?

A4a: I support efforts to reestablish funding that has been cut in recent years. Funding coming from matching community partnerships, grants, increases from the state undesignated fund, and I am open to all revenue measures. I consider this an investment in our future workforce.

4b. As a follow up, if cuts are maintained or deepened, which programs within the UA system should be prioritized over others and where does the engineering curriculum fall in the priorities list?

A4b: The engineering program is a high priority as this is where many statewide firms recruit and rely on for stellar employees who love Alaska. The University is an area to invest in, making sure our programs meet the workforce needs of Alaska. Healthcare, teaching, engineering, business, mining, fishing, tourism, career technical and innovation.

4c. Architecture, landscape architecture, and interior design programs are not offered within the UA system. What are your thoughts on strengthening opportunities for Alaskans through the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) program to make attaining these professional degrees more feasible so Alaskans can return home to our state to fill the need for design professionals?

A4c: I will always support this.

5. Several states have sought to reduce or eliminate the scope of professional licensing (Engineers, Architects, Land Surveyors, and Landscape Architect) within their states. What is your stance on Alaska's current requirements for these professions: should the state's laws remain the same or be subject to change, and if changed, would you support decreasing or increasing the projects that require professional licensure?

A5: I support keeping what we have. I do think APDC in conjunction with the AELS Board should better define what those licenses can or cannot do.

6. The "Industrial Exemption", found in Alaska Statute 08.48.331(a)(10), allows certain infrastructure, systems, and structural projects to be designed without the requirement of a licensed Professional Engineer (PE) IF the project is such that the risk to human health, safety, and welfare is limited only to employees of the company doing the work and not the "general public". It has been suggested that some very significant engineering disasters in our nation's history, such as the Challenger Space Shuttle Disaster of 1986 and the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill of 2010, may have been linked to similar "Industrial Exemptions" and might have been averted had a licensed PE been the ultimate steward of safety in those examples. Do you feel it

is appropriate or inappropriate to maintain Alaska's Industrial Exemption?

A6: I feel that it is inappropriate to maintain Alaska's Industrial Exemption.

7. State law requires that all new buildings larger than a triplex are to be designed and constructed to the latest approved edition of the International Building Code. However, engineers performing earthquake damage assessments after the November 2018 earthquake found that a large portion of buildings are not being built in conformance with the code where there is no formal enforcement. This led to more structural damage in Eagle River and the Matanuska Borough, where there is no code enforcement, compared to Anchorage, where there is code enforcement, even though ground motions were similar. What would you do to bolster adherence to and enforcement of building codes in the vulnerable and growing population centers around Alaska that are not currently under the purview of a local code official?

A7: I would be willing to work with groups like APDC to come up with solutions for this. One solution is to have a statewide building code for design and enforcement, my understanding is it is difficult to get public support for this. Education is needed on the importance of this for public safety. We just had a huge earthquake so the time may be perfect for that. I have talked with engineers that believe an earthquake preparedness plan needs to be in place for Alaska, developed and supported with local, state and federal resources.

8. Do you have any plans to help reduce greenhouse gasses in order to mitigate the effects of climate change in Alaska?

A8: I would like to see many efforts in this area. Our state public facilities need to have energy efficiency assessments and upgrades, with the state investing in funding this process upfront for long term savings. For example, when serving on the Juneau School Board, through energy efficiencies we were able to reduce our carbon footprint through upgrades and then maintenance of timed venting and heating systems by 28 percent and then saving 2 million over four years in energy costs. It's critical through the Power Cost Equalization fund to keep the required \$500,000 to renewable energy projects. More is needed than that, and I support a public works general obligation bond to take care of deferred maintenance and public infrastructure needs. This would need to be a well-coordinated plan so projects could be funded through all stages. Projects in hydro, wind, solar, heating pumps, and geothermal to meet our urban and rural energy needs should be a part of that.

9. Is there anything you would like our organization to know about you?

A9: I am married to a licensed Professional Engineer