

Name: **David Nees**

District: **House District 22**

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: The state needs to reduce its reliance on savings to fund operations. Currently the revenue from other state sources, (non-Federal and non-oil revenue) is sent to general funds in separate buckets of money, designated and undesignated funds.

The funds are usually sent back to the designate fund source, as way of getting around dedicated funds clause in the Ak Constitution.

All revenue is the color green and it all needs to be available. State matches for federal funds usually draw in more Federal money than the state collects in Revenue. A good deal for all. So the funds that draw from the GF that do not have matches will be the focus of the budget arguments.

The Federal underfunding of IHS (Indian Health Services) added 48,000 Alaskan natives to the Medicaid rolls that should have been fully paid by the Federal Government. The state needs to appeal the underfunding or sue the Federal Gov.

The people created the dividend and would have removed the income tax if they were allowed to vote. So they must be consulted in an advisory vote to remove/ enshrine the dividend and reinstate or not the income tax.

The needs put on the Government are endless and the people need to understand you need to prioritize those services.

I use my 1968 almanac for a guide or what we spent the budget on when we were poor.

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: We raised the user fees on state parks, on gasoline taxes and hunting fishing licenses, but as you know this all goes into the General Fund to be appropriated by the Legislature. So user fees do not work as intended. Our infrastructure needs are many and the federal funds matching program is the best way to maximize the funding.

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: Federal matching funding is good

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

A4a: The land grant for the University is the smallest of any state, the Legislature needs to get more Federal lands transferred to the University system. The university needs to use those lands to generate operational income.

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 two most successful, wait lists abound programs are Engineering and Nursing, the University needs to expand those programs to meet demand while cutting all other programs that cannot be funded from the land grants.

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: It works for the medical programs I see no reason to not add those programs, with the same return to Ak provision.

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: Licensing should not be a barrier or a revenue generator, as it is a barrier to interstate commerce. All of Alaskas licensing needs to be moved to commerce including teacher certification, to reduce overhead. Then a review must be done to remove barriers to entry. The state needs to get out of the way.

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: Refer back to question 5, is it a requirement only in Alaska?

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: Building codes put in place after the 1964 earthquake resulted in most of the building in Anchorage having little damage. One universal code for the state makes no sense, as it inhibits the building business.

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

A8: No

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

A9: www.nees4change.com