

Name: **Jamin Burton**

District: **House District 17**

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: This is the number one issue in the state right now and should be the priority for every person involved in our governance. In addition to finding an immediate solution, I believe that we need to take steps to provide for stability and continuity in the future as well. I believe that we must diversify our revenue. Oil and other natural resources will always be important to Alaska, but it is time to end our complete dependence on them. If elected I will advocate for a state wide sales tax. Sales tax is broad based, fair, and effective. I am not opposed to examining the oil tax credits, which I believe are overly generous, but the oil industry also deserves some stability so I would not press this as much as I would a sales tax. I am not opposed to reducing spending, but I do not buy into the rhetoric of crying out for cutting spending without specifics. I will look at every expense and listen to constituents as we prioritize where to spend money, but we must balance the budget.

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. We cannot have things that we are not willing to pay for. Infrastructure is vital to economic prosperity, development, education, tourism, and everything else that most Alaskan's value. We must pay for what we want/need.

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](https://omb.alaska.gov/ombfiles/21_budget/DNR/Proposed/2021proj32552.pdf) Do you support the state receiving these funds? If not, why?

A3: Yes, I support receiving these funds. Using these funds will increase opportunities for Alaskans and will fund jobs for Alaskans. They increase ways for Alaskans to recreate outdoors in health and safe ways.

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: I do not support further cuts. I would like to see Alaska provide robust, efficient, and effective educational opportunities for higher education. I think that the cuts implemented have and will continue to have a drastic negative impact on Alaskans and our University; however, restoring funding while facing a multi-billion dollar deficit is also a tall task and I'm not sure that at this point how it will reduce the impact of the cuts. I am open to discussions and ideas, but any increase in funding must come from somewhere and will be dependent on diversifying and increasing revenue streams for the state.

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: As mentioned I do not support more cuts, and I would like to find ways to restore funding. That being said, if more programs are threatened by our current fiscal situation, I would prioritize all academic programs over non-academic programs, for example classes over sports. If academic programs must be cut, the programs that I view as essential to providing a future for Alaskans and which should not be cut would include education and related fields, nursing and related fields, engineering and related fields, and math/science and related fields. These programs must be protected to provide a future for young Alaskans.

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: Even prior to our current crisis and the debilitating cuts to our university system, WUE was a vital piece of the puzzle for many young Alaskan's seeking higher education. I will continue to support WUE and other opportunities for Alaskans to seek opportunities to pursue higher education. The problem I have observed is that many students with the intent of returning to Alaska after finishing a degree never come back. WUE is a great tool and a stop gap, but we need to find ways to offer valuable programs efficiently and effectively within our state.

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 maintaining professional licensing. I am not an engineer so I would want to have a lot of conversations to understand current licensing requirements and proposed changes before voting on anything to change them; however, I am a licensed professional in an unrelated field and fully recognize that licensing protects everyone in an industry. It protects those that train people for the field, those that are practicing in the field, and those that utilize the field as consumers. Any changes to any fields licensing should only be done after thorough vetting and hearings with input and feedback from all of those that will be impacted.

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 think it is inappropriate. First, employees have a right to expect safe working conditions and cutting corners on engineering licensing puts people at risk. Secondly, Alaska is dependent on maintaining a balance between a variety of natural resource in a harsh climate with unpredictable forces and sometimes unexpected results. Oil, mining, timber, fishing, construction, water, and more are all interconnected. The ramifications for potential failure in an engineering design in Alaska could be catastrophic. We should not be cutting corners.

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: \*did not answer\*

Alaska Professional Design Council (APDC) 2020 Candidate Questionnaire

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

A8: No, I am willing to work with other elected officials and explore ideas and possibilities that will be possible to help Alaska, but have no current plans in place.

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

A9: I am a non-partisan candidate that views holding public office as a service to my community. I am not a career politician and am not looking to use this office as a stepping stone. I am willing to research, read, listen, build consensus, defer to experts, and admit when I don't have enough information to make a decision. I am also willing to learn and do the work to get more information. I do not buy into the idea that we can cut everything as a way to achieve prosperity and success, nor that we can afford everything we might desire. We need compromise to provide stability and opportunity for the future of our residents and families.