

Name: Carolyn Hall

Office/District: Alaska State House, District 16

Domestic violence and sexual assault as an area of concern:

Primary concern

Are you familiar with local programs that provide domestic violence and sexual assault services to victims across Alaska?

Somewhat

How often do you interact with the domestic violence/sexual assault shelter or victim services program in your area?

Other: I interact with victim advocates and service providers through the legislative process, community events, constituent work, and discussions about public safety and funding.

1. 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?

My vision is for Alaska to be a place where every resident feels safe and supported, survivors can get help when they need it, and children can grow up in safe homes.

Getting there requires a comprehensive approach that invests as seriously in preventing violence as we do in responding to it after it occurs. That means:

- stable funding for shelters, crisis services, victim advocates, and legal assistance
- expanding mental health and substance use services
- strengthening prevention and education
- and helping survivors achieve economic independence.

We also need to protect the people and organizations doing this work. That is why I sponsored HB 222, which would allow organizations to seek workplace violence protective orders.

Employees at victim counseling centers and shelters have faced credible threats and acts of violence themselves. The people providing a safe place for survivors deserve to be safe while doing their jobs.

2. What responsibilities do you believe the Legislature and other elected officials hold in advancing efforts to prevent domestic violence and sexual assault?

I believe the Legislature and other elected officials have both a policy and a funding responsibility when it comes to preventing domestic and sexual violence. We cannot say these issues are priorities and then leave the organizations doing the work without the resources they need.

We also have a responsibility to work closely with community partners, service providers, survivors, and experts to strengthen prevention and education. That includes giving young people the tools to recognize unhealthy relationships, understand consent, and learn what respectful and appropriate behavior looks like through age-appropriate education in schools and community programs.

What efforts have you made at the local, state and federal level?

During my first term in the Legislature, I sponsored HB 222 to establish workplace violence protective orders. One of the reasons I introduced the bill was the increasing number of credible threats and acts of violence directed at victim counseling centers and shelters. Existing remedies such as trespass laws do not always provide these organizations with timely or adequate protection.

3. Would you be willing to increase the current level of funding for victims' services?

Yes

4. Would you be willing to increase the current level of funding for domestic violence/sexual assault prevention work?

Yes

5. Would you be willing to increase the current level of funding for legal services for victims?

Yes

6. Currently, the domestic violence response is largely a criminal justice response. Do you have ideas for other types of responses?

Criminal accountability is important, but we cannot arrest our way out of domestic violence. Alaska needs a broader approach that gives survivors options and addresses both the immediate harm and the factors that can contribute to continued cycles of violence.

That means access to counseling and behavioral health services, trauma-informed care, safe and affordable housing, legal assistance, and services for children who have experienced violence in their homes. We also need to invest in community-based prevention and education that helps people recognize unhealthy relationships and build healthier ones, as well as effective intervention programs for people who cause harm.

Most importantly, we need to listen to survivors. Different situations require different responses, and survivors should have access to the resources and support they need to make informed decisions about their own safety and healing.

7. Do you think the penalties for sexual violence crimes in Alaska are:

Too Soft:

I believe the penalties for domestic and sexual violence crimes in Alaska are often too soft. Many offenders receive lenient sentences that do not adequately reflect the severity of their actions or the lasting impact on the victim. This can undermine the seriousness of these crimes and fail to deter future offenses. Strengthening penalties could increase accountability and better protect victims and communities.

8. Do you think the penalties for domestic violence crimes in Alaska are:

Too Soft:

Accountability must be meaningful, particularly for repeat offenders and serious or escalating violence.

9. Would you support funding through the Department of Corrections for batterers intervention programming? Do you think this is the responsibility of government?

Yes.

If evidence-based batterers intervention programs can reduce repeat violence, government has an important public safety interest in making those programs available and ensuring they meet appropriate standards.

Accountability and intervention are not mutually exclusive. Holding someone accountable should include doing everything reasonably possible to prevent that person from harming another partner or family member in the future.

10. Do you believe abortion access should be legally protected for survivors of rape or incest?

Yes

11. Alaska is experiencing a statewide housing shortage. What would be your ideas to address its impact on domestic and sexual violence survivors?

Alaska's housing shortage is especially dangerous for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Leaving an abusive situation is already extraordinarily difficult, and when there is nowhere safe and affordable to go, survivors may be forced to choose between homelessness and remaining with an abuser.

That is another reason I believe we need to increase housing production across Alaska. We need more housing at every level, and we also need to ensure survivors have access to emergency shelter, transitional housing, and safe, affordable long-term housing. The state should work closely with domestic violence and sexual assault programs, housing providers, Tribal organizations, local governments, and other community partners to identify where the greatest gaps exist.

We should also recognize housing as part of our prevention and public safety strategy. State investments in housing and infrastructure should consider the needs of people facing housing instability, including survivors and their children. We should protect successful housing assistance programs, leverage federal resources, and look for opportunities to expand the supply of affordable housing.

Ultimately, no Alaskan should have to stay in a dangerous home because they cannot afford to leave. If we are serious about addressing domestic and sexual violence, making sure survivors have a safe place to go has to be part of the solution.

12. What remedies might you suggest to provide protection for children who experience or witness domestic violence?

We need to ensure access to emergency shelters, support public education programs that teach healthy relationships and conflict resolution, and help families navigate a complicated legal system. Children who experience violence in their homes need safety, stability, and trauma-informed support, including counseling and behavioral health services, strong advocacy within the court system, and safe housing with their non-abusive parent or caretaker. We also need educators, health care providers, law enforcement officers, and other professionals who interact with families to be properly trained to recognize and respond to abuse.

Supporting the non-abusive parent is often one of the most effective ways to protect a child. A parent should never be penalized for being a victim of domestic violence; we should make sure they have the resources and support they need to create a safe and stable environment for their children.

13. A sunset review is a mandatory, periodic evaluation of an executive board or commission to determine if its public benefit justifies its continued existence, funding, and legal authority. The Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) in the Department of Public Safety is scheduled to sunset June 30, 2028, and will be reviewed during the next Legislature. Would you support a bill to extend the Council?

Yes

Alaska continues to experience extraordinarily high rates of domestic and sexual violence. This is not the time to eliminate the state entity charged with coordinating our response.

CDVSA plays an important role in supporting victim services, prevention efforts and coordination among state agencies and community organizations. I support extending the Council and using the sunset review process to identify ways to strengthen its effectiveness.

14. Please explain any solutions you would propose to support victims and hold offenders accountable for their actions.

Alaska needs a comprehensive approach.

For survivors, that means ensuring access to safe shelter, affordable housing, legal assistance, health and behavioral health care, advocacy and other services regardless of where they live in our state.

For offenders, accountability means appropriate criminal consequences as well as interventions designed to reduce the likelihood that they will harm someone again.

We also have to invest upstream. Young people need education about healthy relationships and consent. Communities need prevention resources. Children who witness violence need support. And the organizations and professionals doing this work need stable funding and protection themselves.

Alaska's rates of domestic and sexual violence are not inevitable. Reducing them will require sustained attention and investment, and I am committed to continuing that work in the Legislature.