

Return survey by October 9, 2026 to: andvsa@andvsa.org

Complete each answer box and select one response where choices are provided.

Name **Kathy Simpler**

Office/District Representation You Are Seeking **House District 5**

Please indicate whether you view domestic violence and sexual assault as an area of primary concern for you.

Primary concern Secondary concern Not on my radar

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

Yes Somewhat No

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

Quarterly Annually **Other**

If other, please specify

This is a vital resource in our community and I am committed to ensuring that it is protected. I have visited the facility in my community several times, connected individuals in need to their services, and have also donated furniture, clothes, and other goods to support their mission and to immediately help the people in their care.

1. The Alaska Victimization Survey (AVS) found 57.7% of Alaskan women have experienced intimate partner violence (domestic violence), sexual violence, or both. 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?

The number of Alaskans who have experienced domestic violence or sexual assault is heartbreaking. These are our neighbors, friends, family members, and people we see in our communities every day. We cannot accept this as a normal part of life in our state.

I spent 30 years as a teacher, and I believe prevention starts early. We need to teach young people what healthy relationships look like, how to recognize abuse, and where to turn for help. We also need to make sure survivors have access to safe housing, counseling, and other services. I am committed to supporting these efforts if I am elected.

My hope is for an Alaska where everyone feels safe in their own home and where people experiencing violence know their community will be there to help them.

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

One of the highest priorities of our government is that they have a responsibility to protect the people they represent. That means making sure our laws are effective, listening to survivors and service providers, and providing the funding needed for prevention and victim services.

We also need to make sure law enforcement and first responders have the staffing, training, and resources to respond when someone needs help. In every major community I've visited in my district - Kodiak, Seward, and Cordova, funding and staff shortages for public safety is an issue for them. I support competitive retirement benefits because we need to be able to recruit and retain experienced public safety professionals. I know that this is even more of a challenge in more rural parts of the state, which is why I support adequate funding for Village Public Safety Officers, Alaska State Troopers, and other rural public safety programs.

3. Would you be willing to increase the current level of funding for victims' services? **Yes** No Maybe

4. Would you be willing to increase the current level of funding for domestic violence/sexual assault prevention work? **Yes** No Maybe

5. Would you be willing to increase the current level of funding for legal services for victims? **Yes** No Maybe

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

Throughout my career as an educator, I worked to create safe and supportive environments for my students. Teachers are often key trusted adults who see firsthand how challenges at home can affect a child's well-being, and I have always been diligent about noticing changes in behavior or signs of abuse. We must ensure that all adults are well equipped to notice those warning signs in not just children but also their peers and those around them.

I have also spent many years advocating for students, educators, and stronger community services. While I have not held legislative office, I would bring that same commitment to listening, learning, and working with the people and organizations addressing domestic violence and sexual assault across Alaska.

7. Do you think the penalties for sexual violence crimes in Alaska are:
Too harsh Too soft **Just right**
What are your reasons?

While I think that our laws allow us to serve lengthy and appropriate sentences for those who are convicted, I think the bigger issue is getting cases to a point where the victim is actually receiving the justice they deserve. I want to see improvements in how these

cases are investigated and prosecuted, including timely processing of sexual assault evidence. Survivors should not have to fight to be heard or spend years waiting for answers. We need a justice system that is more effective at bringing a case to a decision to hold offenders accountable, not one that discourages victims and survivors from coming forward.

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

Too harsh **Too soft** Just right

What are your reasons?

I am especially concerned about repeat offenders and situations where abuse continues or becomes more dangerous over time. We need to take those warning signs seriously rather than waiting until someone is severely injured or their life is taken. Protective orders need to be enforced, and people who repeatedly harm their partners or families need to face appropriate consequences. Just as importantly, victims need somewhere safe to go and access to support so they are not forced to stay in dangerous situations.

9. Would you support funding through the Department of Corrections to engage individuals who choose to harm their partners/families through batterers intervention programming (BIPs)? Do you think this is the responsibility of the government? Why or why not?

Yes. If intervention programs can help people recognize their abusive behavior, take responsibility, and stop harming others, they deserve consideration and support.

What would be your ideas for providing services to people who choose to cause harm to their partners?

People need to understand the harm they have caused and be willing to do the work to change. Treatment is not an excuse for abuse, but preventing someone from harming another person is an important part of making our communities safer. I would support programs that focus on accountability and changing abusive behavior, including batterers intervention programs and access to mental health or substance use treatment when appropriate.

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

Yes No - I fundamentally believe reproductive healthcare decisions should be made by individuals and their medical providers, not politicians.

11. The state of Alaska is experiencing a housing shortage statewide. This is impacting domestic and sexual violence survivors' ability to move forward with their lives. What would be your ideas to address this?

Housing is a challenge across our state, but it's especially an issue in my district. For someone trying to leave an abusive relationship, that shortage can become a serious safety issue.

We need to invest in affordable housing, support emergency shelters and transitional housing programs, and work with organizations that help survivors find permanent homes. I would also support partnerships with AHFC, local governments, and community organizations to expand housing opportunities.

Nobody should have to stay in an unsafe home simply because they cannot afford to leave.

12. Children are a particularly vulnerable population and may be traumatized by living with an abusive person and witnessing violence perpetrated against a parent or caretaker. What remedies might you suggest to provide protection for these children?

After 30 years in the classroom, I know that children carry the experiences they have at home into school with them. Sometimes teachers are among the first people to notice when a child is struggling, and it is important that we know how to respond.

I support training for educators and other adults who work with children to recognize signs of abuse and connect families with appropriate services. We also need accessible counseling and mental health support for children who have experienced trauma. Protecting them means addressing immediate safety concerns while also giving them the care and stability they need to recover.

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 No Maybe

What are your reasons?

Domestic violence and sexual assault remain serious problems in Alaska, and we need continued coordination and support for the organizations working to address them.

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

I believe we need to approach this issue from both sides: making sure survivors have the support they need and making sure those who commit violence are held responsible.

That means reliable funding for shelters, counseling, legal assistance, and prevention programs. It also means supporting law enforcement, improving how cases are handled, and making sure protective orders are taken seriously.

I am committed to making DVSA and MMIP priorities while also addressing broader challenges like housing shortages and public safety workforce development that can make it harder for survivors to find safety and stability.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this survey.