

FAIRBANKS DAILY NEWS MINER

2018 Primary & General Election

Candidate Survey Questions

Submitted: 08OCT2018

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Up to 100 words for the following question:

- 1. Gov. Bill Walker signed legislation allowing Alaska Permanent Fund investment earnings to be used to help close the state's projected \$2.1 billion budget for the next fiscal year, which starts July 1. Still, the budget is expected to be short \$700 million and budget gaps are expected for several years. What is your solution?**

LAMKIN: Someone has GOT to finally say this: I believe the situation we now face has been planned by BIG MONEY for at least about 10 years now, if not much longer. That plan evidently included to: 1. Gerrymander our election districts; 2. Pull the rug from under our state oil tax revenue system; 3. manipulate the public with media and rhetoric to justify the changes; 4. use party politics to assign blame; and 5. spend down the CBR and force an erosion of the permanent fund. We must fix our system before this end game plays out.

Up to 60 words for the following questions (hereafter):

- 2. Do you support or oppose placing into the Alaska Constitution the issuance of the annual permanent fund dividend and the method of calculating it? Why or why not?**

LAMKIN: The formula is fine. I am currently indifferent to the PFD being placed in the constitution. I believe it is a moot point, unless it assumes without additional protection the PFD will eventually be eliminated. Meanwhile it is a distraction from us considering the fundamental issue before us, which is how to establish a long-term sustainable state budget.

- 3. Name a specific program you would like to reduce or eliminate. Explain.**

LAMKIN: Every state program has a constituency. Flat unallocated cuts to be absorbed across various state agencies has perhaps reached its limit. It is time to examine more and more closely whole programs which are effective and worthwhile, and others which may need to be shut down. Reducing or eliminating programs or services is inevitable and must be approached carefully.

- 4. Name a specific program you would like to expand or initiate. Explain.**

LAMKIN: This is no time to expand nor initiate new programs. However, we should consider reassigning some resources to more directly benefit Alaskans. Crime reduction, for example, should be addressed by getting folks off drugs and into training programs or employed, by investing in existing community service organizations, particularly those working in drug rehabilitation, vocational rehabilitation, and mental health assistance.

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5. ***Growers in Alaska’s legal cannabis industry say the \$50 per ounce flat tax they pay to the state needs to be revised because it doesn’t adjust as the price of their product goes down. What, if any, changes do propose in the state’s taxing of marijuana?***

LAMKIN: Currently, I believe \$50/ounce is not unreasonable. This is a new industry and not enough time has passed to truly know price, supply and demand sensitivities. The market is simply too young to argue for tax changes yet. I will look forward to seeing more industry data to help determine whether a tax adjustment is warranted.

6. ***While the price of oil has increased slightly from recent years, the oil industry is not performing as it used to. What ideas do you have for diversifying Alaska’s economy and bringing revenue back to the state?***

LAMKIN: Dream big, right? I would like to see us revisit the way the Permanent Fund works, to grow the PF even more. If we could agree to grow the PF into a super fund, in the long run we could not only pay full dividends to our citizens, but perhaps even fund core government services with the additional investment earnings.

7. ***The budgets of the city of Fairbanks, city of North Pole and the Fairbanks North Star Borough, along with those of other Alaska municipalities, have suffered under the loss of state revenue sharing. Do you think the program should be revived and funded? Why or why not.***

LAMKIN: The revenue sharing program was a great way for the state to share oil wealth, allowing local government bodies to have more local control over how those resources are expended. Without it, local spending and property taxes are equally impacted. I believe we can restore R/S soon after we restore the manner in which we tax Alaska’s resources.

8. ***This past legislative session saw the departure of several legislators for sexual misconduct. How do you hope to address this issue within the Capitol and across the state?***

LAMKIN: These events were awful, but did serve to give notice that sexual misconduct is occurring everywhere. Awareness and training has already begun in the Legislature, as it should in every workplace, school, and at home. We must foster a spirit of respect and healthy boundaries for every person, and have zero tolerance for sexual misconduct.

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9. ***Do you support or oppose efforts in Congress to modify the 50-50 state-federal revenue share agreement from oil development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to give Alaska Native regional corporations 3 percent of the state's share? Explain.***

LAMKIN: Ask yourself, who does the oil belong to? How you choose to answer that question will determine your policy path to follow. I choose to say it is Alaskans' oil. The 50-50 split should be between the state of Alaska and ANRCs. Short of that, then the Federal government should provide 3% of its share to ANRCs, not the state.

10. ***Should there be a "no wolf hunting" buffer zone on state land around Denali National Park to protect wolf viewing access for visitors to the park? Explain.***

LAMKIN: This is a policy area best addressed by our Board of Game professionals. My intuition is to be disinclined to support such a buffer-zone. Boundaries and buffer zones are irrelevant to wolves themselves. It is Alaskans, not tourists, who should be making those decisions, for sustainable yield, and for the maximum benefit of Alaskans.

11. ***Should a seat on the Alaska Board of Game be designated for a non-hunter? Explain.***

LAMKIN: No. Management of state resources belongs in the hands of the respective user groups of those resources. Should a dairy farmer help govern the Real Estate Commission? Should a politician help govern the AK Public Offices Commission? Keep decisions made to regulate hunters, subsistence, and hunting ethics and safety in the hands of the professionals in the industry.

12. ***State funding for the University of Alaska increased \$10 million for fiscal 2019. The amount is less than the \$24 million increase sought by the university but is the first increase following four years of funding cuts. What priority do you place on university funding?***

LAMKIN: I am a strong advocate for the UA system, having deep roots in its governance and advocacy at a young age. The UA represents a huge investment in our state. It helps develop future generations of Alaskan leaders, and is a considerable economic engine, one example being in the form of research, seeking innovative solutions to our unique Arctic conditions.

13. ***What effort and resources, if any, would you devote to asserting claims of public access to long-existing trails and routes that may be eligible to be grandfathered under federal Revised Statute 2477 when Congress repealed that statute in 1976?***

LAMKIN: Alaska of course has vast amounts of land and access issues related to it. Each instance should be weighed carefully on a case-by-case basis, to help determine what best balances the common good with private property investment interests. The most compelling instances deserve the most resources to assert access rights.

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- 14. Alaska has the lowest highway motor fuel (gasoline and diesel) tax and fee combination in the nation, by far, at 8.95 cents per gallon. The next closest is Virginia at 16.8 cents (gasoline). The highest is Pennsylvania at 58.7 cents (gasoline). Alaska collected \$29.3 million from the highway fuel tax and fee in fiscal 2017. Do you think Alaska should raise its highway motor fuel tax to help close the budget gap? Explain.**

LAMKIN: No. Alaska provides the oil in the first place and already pays among the highest gas prices. Besides, the additional gas tax revenue would be a pittance in the state's coffers. The real underlying issue of our state budget is not how we tax our citizens, but rather how we tax our resources.

- 15. Under what circumstances, if any, should abortions be permitted under state law?**

LAMKIN: I do not believe the state government has any business deciding for citizens whether or not they may or may not have an abortion. I personally do not support abortions, but I do support an individual's right to decide, and to pay for it, themselves.

- 16. Many states have what is called a "Religious Freedom Restoration Law." Does Alaska need one? Explain.**

LAMKIN: I agree with the spirit of RFRL, where government must demonstrate a compelling interest for it to interfere with religious activity. Whether or not Alaska needs such a law is currently not apparent to me. If the time comes to necessitate the state being held more accountable, I would not hesitate to act to protect religious exercises from government burden.

- 17. Are you satisfied with the level of staffing at the Alaska State Troopers? If yes, why? If no, what will you do about it?**

LAMKIN: Core government service includes public safety. Clearly we have a shortage of troopers, some of whom are drawn instead to locally-based police departments. The most apparent means to attract and retain our law enforcement officers is to improve our retirement system.

- 18. Fairbanks has a well-known wintertime air quality problem involving fine particulate matter known as PM2.5. Do you support aggressive state regulation of local residents if local government efforts are not sufficient to comply with the federal Clean Air Act and avoid Environmental Protection Agency sanctions against the state? Explain.**

LAMKIN: I look forward to the recent and on-going efforts of our local experts to find a long term solution to the PM2.5 issue. We need to look to the private sector, via innovation and new technology. Relying heavily on state, or especially the federal government, to police local residents is not the approach Fairbanks should be taking.

--END FDNM SURVEY--