

Questions posed by AHS to candidates running in the upcoming election:

1. Alaska state budget cuts – Alaska state programs designed to “guard our cultural heritage,” including Libraries, Archives and Museums (Department of Education), the Office of History and Archaeology (Department of Natural Resources) and the University of Alaska, protect priceless historical records, and teach the state’s history. In recent years, state funding for these programs has been significantly cut (the University of Alaska, for example, has taken a 30% reduction in state funding since 2015). Do you favor increased state funding to collect and maintain Alaska’s historical records, including paper records, photos, films and oral recordings, and to preserve historic, archaeological and cultural sites?
2. Review of Alaska statues and monuments – The current national discussion about civil rights and racism has prompted a review of the appropriateness of whether certain historical figures and events should be celebrated through statues and monuments in the public square. This discussion is also taking place in Alaska, such as with statues of Secretary of State William Seward, British explorer Captain James Cook and Russian Alaska manager Alexander Baranov. Do you favor or oppose a public discussion about removing such statues and if so, how do you believe such a discussion should occur?
3. Seattle federal archives closing - As a revenue-generating measure, a federal board has recommended closing the closest National Archives to Alaska located in Seattle and shipping its holdings, including thousands of Alaska historical records, to California and Missouri. This closure would place invaluable Alaska historical records even further from Alaska researchers, historians, tribal organizations and students. The AHS opposes this closure and seeks to work with regional partners to maintain the archives in the Pacific Northwest. Do you favor or oppose closing the National Archives and Records Center in Seattle? If you oppose its closure, what steps would you propose to make its Alaska records available to Alaskans?

Don Young

U.S. House of Representatives

1. Each year I support increasing federal funding, through the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences, which is allocated to the state to collect and maintain Alaska’s historical records and preserve historical, archaeological, and cultural sites. Additionally, I have been involved in the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress, which has allowed us to preserve firsthand remembrances and artifacts of Alaska’s military veterans dating back to World War I. Preserving our unique American history is something that I believe is important to protect. Government entities hold many of America’s historical artifacts, but unlike the federal government, many state and local governments cannot adequately fund the preservation of their historical artifacts. The government’s responsibility is to fully document the nation’s past and preserve the permanently valuable records of our history and heritage. These records can provide benefits necessary for America to succeed in the future and must be sufficiently supported.

2. I place great importance on constant contact with my constituents, and I will always encourage open dialogue to know how they feel about certain issues. This is why I am not opposed to a public discussion about the appropriateness of whether certain historical figures and events should be celebrated through statues and monuments in the public square. I understand that this is a very real and serious issue that must be addressed. However, we have to be aware that a public discussion about our country's history pertaining to civil rights and racism will be a sensitive subject, which can deter people from participating because of the emotional aspects or the fear of saying the wrong thing. We can't simply silence our past by removing remembrance deemed a problem; we must ensure we acknowledge the past fully and completely so that history does not repeat itself.
3. I have always opposed actions that deny Alaskans adequate and timely access to historical Alaskan documents. When NARA closed the Anchorage facility in 2014, I openly expressed my disappointment with NARA and urged them to use the proceeds from the sale of their excess property, made possible by my bill H.R. 3786, to digitize as many Alaskans records as possible. This year, I joined with members from the House and Senate and sent a letter urging NARA to work with OMB to rescind its decision to close the Seattle facility. I also co-led the appropriation letter asking for Fiscal Year 2021 funding to help with digitalizing efforts, so Alaskans' ability to access Federal records will not suffer due to being relocated the second time. As a young state, Alaskans rely on NARA to provide documentation relating to numerous issues and to protect the rights and benefits due to Alaska Natives.

Shelley Hughes
State Senate District F

1. Thank you for your question and your organization's dedication to the "promotion of Alaska history by the exchange of ideas and information, the preservation and interpretation of resources, and the education of Alaskans about their heritage." We need adequate state funds to collect and maintain records and to preserve significant sites as our historic and cultural basis is foundational for our future as far as understanding, research, and potential. Without a thorough and objective audit, however, as to the status of these collection and preservation tasks in regard to the current budget numbers, it would be naive for me to say that recent funding has been inadequate or too generous or spot on. I support a detailed, independent, non-biased audit of state agencies to help guide both the executive branch in building its proposed budget and the legislature in adjusting and passing it. I would guess at this present time, there are agencies that could be restructured to run more efficiently and effectively. I also would guess that there are some agencies that are underfunded and failing in their statutorily based missions. To help remove at least some of the politics from the budget process, I support an Audit Sunset Commission to begin this much needed "in the weeds" review of every department and program over the next several years. Because the programs would "sunset" if the legislature did not take up and act

- on the audit, this would ensure the audit report would be considered rather than ignored and brushed aside. Through this process, we could ensure adequate funding for record collection and maintenance and site preservation.
2. As a strong supporter of First Amendment rights, I support public discussions on topics, including those that are controversial. My hope is that a conversation on this topic would be rational, peaceful, and include long-term vision and an appreciation and respect for the everyday Alaskans from the past who at their point in time in history felt a certain way and supported a certain statue or monument. (This sense of Alaskans at different points on our state's timeline is actually part of our history too, and consideration of the preservation of that sense should be factored into the equation.) I'm open to your organization's suggestions as to how best that conversation might occur, but I think it will be important to include statewide participants even though some of these conversations may begin locally and any decisions made may in some cases be under the jurisdiction of a local community where the statue or monument is located.
 3. I do not see that another hour or two on a plane to get to California versus Seattle is going to decrease access for Alaskans any more than it already is. If the National Archives were in Alaska and they were being moved to the lower 48, that would be a different story - and I would do what I could to try to keep the historical records here in state. That is not the case, however. Having said that, if there is a way to keep the Center in Seattle by working with regional partners to leverage private sector dollars as opposed to public tax dollars, I would favor that. I also would favor that if the Alaskan historical records are to be moved to one of two centers, that it be the one closest in proximity to Alaska (e.g., Sacramento vs St. Louis). But before any of these options, first and foremost, I would work with our federal delegation to see if there is any way that one of our existing federal buildings in Alaska could house Alaska's historical records - as that would be the best solution of all.

Tom Begich
State Senate District J

1. Yes. I have always supported funding our University and our Alaska history and cultural heritage programs – as a Legislative aid, a private citizen, and most recently as a State Senator - and will continue to do so. I've used our Archives, our State Library, attended our University, and, this past year, I fought for additional funding for the University and secured a \$640,000 increment for our state libraries. Unfortunately, the Governor vetoed that increment.
2. I favor a public discussion and believe that such a discussion should occur at the local level – communities should have the ability to talk about how we recall our past and respond to our present. These discussions should happen in our classrooms and be a part of community discussions. Perhaps the society could sponsor these, but I am not otherwise certain how to best do this.

3. I oppose closing the National Archives office in Seattle – this is a mistake. At the very least our delegation should stop this effort. As a leader in my party, should there be a change in Administration, I'll work directly with the new President to change this decision. If the incumbent is reelected, then I would reach out to our delegation and my cross-party leaders in the Senate to fight this change. Losing the office here was bad enough. It is difficult to know how best to access this information if it is moved.

Roselynn Cacy
State Senate District L

1. The cuts to the University of Alaska budget and the public health system occurred just prior to the pandemic, limiting our ability to respond to the crisis. I objected to the cuts and support the restoration of them. I favor increased state funding to collect and maintain Alaska's historical records, including paper records, photos, films and oral recordings, and to preserve historic, archaeological and cultural sites.
2. I support the current national discussion about the appropriateness of whether certain historical figures and events should be celebrated through statues and monuments in the public squares. I was at the University of Wisconsin when we had protests about increasing curriculum to be more inclusive and learned what tear gas felt like. There is so much about our history that I still do not know. When I stayed in an Athabaskan village, it was difficult watching the children cheer for the Cowboys at the Friday movies. I am only learning now about the pain many Alaskans are feeling when they see statues of individuals who were so cruel to their parents. Our elders and those who suffered from these historical figures need to be involved in the discussion and need to be immediately recognized and engaged in the process.
3. I oppose the closing of the National Archives to Alaska located in Seattle, shipping its holdings to California and Missouri. I object to the sale of these valuable irreplaceable public resources for temporary revenue. I would join in with the American Historical Association, the Council of State Archivists, the Organization of American Historians, and Alaska's Congressional Delegation in opposing the move. If they are going to be moved, they need to be returned to Alaska to facilities equipped to safely store the treasures at Federal expense, reimbursed by proceeds of the sale. I look forward to learning more about the Alaskan historical documents and items that are now in many different states. We need to document where they are, make sure they are safely stored, and return as many as we can to Alaska.

Andy Holleman
State Senate District M

1. I consider maintaining artifacts of our history to be an important function of government. Obviously getting our fiscal house in order will create tight budgets but this should be part of it, with an overall budget plan that gives stability and predictability to funding.
2. For publicly owned statues, the conversation should come through the elected bodies that have control of them. There should be a process to push for a discussion if enough citizens want that. The decision should come through the public process. The statues represent our history, but there are aspects of history that should not be celebrated. I want statues place in the right context to preserve the history they represent.
3. I favor retention of the Seattle facility and would use whatever influence I had as a citizen or legislator to promote that.

Carolyn Clift
State Senate District N

1. Alaska state budget cuts- I favor flat funding until we find new sources of revenue for this project.
2. Review of Alaska statues and monuments- I support keeping the statues in public spots. If we have a public discussion, it should be to show the history of the statues and to have the “other side” of the history shown through artwork and plaques, as it applies to Alaska.
3. Seattle federal archives closing--- California and Missouri are just as inaccessible to Alaskans as Seattle. I do not favor closing the archives, I do not favor moving the Alaska historical records. Pack the Alaska collection in boxes and ship it up here, to Anchorage. There is a lot of vacant space in state-owned buildings and on the University campus. This will be a great project for our university and for your nonprofit to take on, and we will find a way!

Julia Hnilicka
State Representative District 06

Worth it?

Jamin Burton
State Representative District 07

1. I definitely value and care about these programs. I recognize the value they provide to our state and community. Education, culture, and history are essential parts of our

- society and our humanity. If circumstances were ideal, I would definitely support them and restore the funding for these programs. Unfortunately, Alaska is not facing ideal circumstances; with a projected 2.3 billion-dollar deficit I am hesitant to commit to something that we may not be able to afford. I do commit to examining all requests and creative solutions for increasing state revenues and prioritizing how we spend our money and it is my hope and desire that we find ways to help these programs continue to serve our community.
2. I support public discussion about how we treat historical figures. The government has a responsibility to be responsive to the people that they govern. Let me be clear. I am not in favor of whitewashing history. I am not in favor of revisionist history. I am not in favor of holding historical figures to today's cultural standards in discussing their contributions and character. I am in favor of honest dialogue and discussion regarding historical figures and how we memorialize them and teach about them. I favor using public spaces and resources in a way that is consistent with the needs and wishes of the people being represented by the government right now. If a monument is owned or placed on state property that discussion should happen at a state level. If owned by a local government, such as the city of Anchorage, the city should facilitate discussion.
 3. Regarding the closing of National Archives to Alaska located in Seattle and relocating these records to California and Missouri, I am opposed to the move. The records contained there are vital to the cultural heritage and history of the people of Alaska. Additionally, these documents contain information used for a variety of legal and educational tasks. They should be accessible to Alaskans. While digitizing records and making them available online is probably the best long-term solution, this is not likely to happen quickly. From my understanding, there are already legal and social efforts to prevent the closure and I support these efforts. If the closure does occur, I would propose that the money saved by closing this federal building be dedicated to digitizing the records to benefit the residents of all of the northwestern states, including Alaska.

Bill Johnson
State Representative District 09

Thanks for the opportunity to take part. After I get elected we should discuss these issues in more detail and with more specifics.

James Canitz
State Representative District 13

Thank you for contacting me.

The issues you raise deserve to be addressed. Historical records, their maintenance for

future reference as tools for education and enlightenment are invaluable, and often irreplaceable. I support the Alaska Historical Society in its efforts to protect and preserve Alaska's historical records.

However, I would like to raise two points.

First, we are in the middle of an economic crisis in our state, in our nation and around the planet. The AK State Legislature is tasked with discovering a method to pay for an overburdened state budget with shrinking revenues. Necessarily, funding people issues are primary and paramount. That being said, efforts to meet the needs of other issues and priorities, if possible.

Second, rather than tasking the candidates to answer very open-ended questions, how about the Alaska Historical Society prepare a position statement on each of the issues, with recommended actions to be taken, and possible solutions to each. Then, ask if the candidates agree with the stated positions and further ask if they would support the recommended actions and solutions?

While the first two questions are obviously within the purview of consideration by the AK State Legislature, question number three is definitely one for our representative and senators in Washington.

If elected to the State Legislature, I believe my task is to represent the interests of my constituency. But it's a two-way street. Your task as a constituent is to identify problems and needs to the Legislative body or your representative. Part of identifying a problem is to suggest possible solutions. The better you do your homework and support the process, the more likely it will be solved. It is not acceptable to identify a problem and simply state, "Fix it!".

The Alaska State Historical Society is the expert on the problems and issues they have identified. No one individual can be an expert on every problem that presents to the State Legislature.

Thank you for your understanding,

Ken McCarty
State Representative District 13

1. The current economic forecasts are necessitating major changes to the budget for stability of the State. There appears to be no consideration for increase. There appears to be serious consideration for creative ways to mitigate needs, wants, and desires of programs. Our historical records reflect generations ago when other Alaskans made it happen with less than desired accommodations and use of community resources. The use of our High Schoolers for credit would be a valuable

resource to help with the integrity of preserving history, in addition to teaching them history.

2. I do not oppose a public discussion. Such discussion would be well served through radio and town hall meetings within each community.
3. Economic decisions in difficult times do not always allow for ideal situations, nor do the decisions disclose the desires of the leadership / policy makers. If the National Archives and Records need to be moved to another location, it is my hope that the integrity of the items are secured. The questions of accessibility is a poor debate in our technologically / travel advanced age.

Paul Bauer
State Representative District 16

1. I favor the funding of significant finds and collections based on the individual project requests as in targeted funding. A private funding campaign would be the most appropriate and beneficial method to ask for those who are in opposition to government subsidy if allowed by law. The University needs to decide its business affairs relevant to historical program operations. I support the current funding levels because of the economic crisis from COVID-19.
2. It appears those that want to desecrate and remove our historical figures do have the ability to forgive. It is proven, one step toward socialism-communism is to take away a nation's history and culture. I do not support public discussion about these specific Alaskan statues and monuments. The historical items were approved by people at the time of inception for reason. The mob needs to be educated. I see the problem of pacification toward aggressive, angry, and uninformed radicals about the reasons for historical and cultural displays in our communities. Anchorage especially has not much in terms of historical landmarks for education and tourism. When I worked for Priciness Motor Coach tours, it was hard to find and view historical landmarks. Parking, location, and presentation were dismal.
3. Public access to the archival records will continue with digitized records online. The public can request copies of any available archival record (digital or analog) by email, telephone, or in writing. I understand they are planning to expand their digitization efforts to make more records available free of charge and regardless of location. Seattle will engage with local researchers and other stakeholders to find opportunities to smooth the transition for the public and support the local researcher community and ensure continued access to records. I would prefer by law that access to ALL historic documents can be researched ONLINE, FREE of charge. I was disgusted when The Ellis Island Historical Society went to private vendors and charged for online access.

Zach Fields**State Representative District 20**

1. I do support funding necessary to preserve historical records in Alaska including in UA system and am on record opposing the Governor's reckless UA cuts.
2. Public discussion of these statues, people, and history is a good thing. While I support removing statues of Confederate terrorists and traitors in the US South, I don't think the same logic applies here. Baranof/Seward/Cook were not waging war against the US, and to my knowledge did not engage in campaigns of lynching. Russian enslavement of Natives was horrific and should be condemned as such, but mere removal of a statue of Baranof (for example) doesn't accomplish that on its own.
3. Archives should stay in Seattle.

Matt Claman**State Representative District 21**

1. I support reasonable and stable state funding to collect and maintain Alaska's historical records.
2. I support public discussions about the appropriateness of certain statues and monuments. These discussions should include interested individuals and groups from the community, be accessible to the public, and provide an opportunity for the public to be heard.
3. I do not support closing the National Archives to Alaska located in Seattle. Because these records relate to Alaska, the Alaska records should be maintained in Alaska. Alaska state officials should work with our federal delegation to develop and implement an effective plan for maintaining the archives in the Pacific Northwest, preferably in Alaska.

Ed King**State Representative District 34**

1. I'm a student of Alaska's history and am awed every time I see something touched by the hands of our ancestors. That connection to our past is a gift. We should find ways to retain and maintain that history and our relationship to it. As the state has limited funds, we might need to get creative to do so. I believe that the Departments of Education and Natural Resources and the University should look at these programs as a higher priority in their budgets than they currently do.
2. The public should always be a part of the process when public dollars and common grounds are concerned. The government should not erect a monument without a public process, and the public should not remove one without a discussion about it. While our

rich history carries stains of bad decisions, those marks don't define us. They also don't go away by trying to hide from our past. I believe we can honor the good that our forefathers did without celebrating the negative circumstances that surrounded them. But, if the majority of the population disagrees, that is what democracy is all about.

3. I'm not familiar with this issue enough to take a stance on it. However, my intuition asks why we can't relocate those historical items important to Alaska to our own facilities. If the Federal government wants to save the money required to maintain them, might they give those records to us?