

ALASKA PRIORITIES

-Tax Free PFD

- I am proposing an exemption to taxation, for our Alaska Permanent Fund dividend checks.
- The PFD is taxed, on a federal level, at the same rates as “ordinary” income (i.e. paychecks and small business profits), while the money Big Oil shareholders make off our oil (via dividends and share buybacks) is usually taxed at capital gains rates.
- In essence, every first Thursday in October, the State of Alaska indirectly transfers millions of dollars (>\$100 million?) from our Permanent Fund, to the U.S. Treasury. That’s something like 60,000+ PFD checks straight to Uncle Sam.
 - This is, of course, in addition to the money the federal government extracts from our extraction industry via wage taxes, corporate taxes, permitting and leasing fees, not to mention the royalties generated from drilling on federal lands within the state.
- The impact to the federal treasury would be minimal... The impact in Alaska would be much more significant.

■ Federal Bailout of the Marine Highway and University Systems.

My intent with this is not only to throw a life preserver to two essential Alaskan institutions, but also to use the “carrot” of federal funds in order to achieve long overdue systemic changes.

- **-AMHS**
 - My thinking, right now, is to address the short term, and long term, financial problems at the same time.
 - Short term: Cash to help weather the Pandemic, purchase 1-3 new mainline ferries, complete priority maintenance/overhauls.
 - Long term: Take politics out of AMHS operational management via the public corporation model we are already familiar with (i.e. AIEDA). Politics has infected ferry planning and management to such an extent that a coherent strategy has proved impossible to realize. I would also call for money to be put into an endowment/permanent fund, with annual withdraws based on a percent of market value approach. If done right, the profits from such a fund could eliminate the need for a state subsidy altogether, or, at least, drastically reduce it. It would also more or less remove politics from AMHS management and provide long term stability.

-U of A

- I propose a similar model here. Money divided up between short term and long term needs.
 - Short term: Pandemic money (to cover lost revenue and to prepare for Pandemic educating, whatever that shapes up to be).
 - Long term: An endowment is the centerpiece of the forward looking aspect of this bailout, again, governed by a POV approach. In addition, consistent with my plan laid out below, to grow our on workers in Rural Alaska, we need to massively scale up the University's distance learning programs (potentially including developing appropriately sized satellite campuses)

RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROPOSALS

- **Utilities**
 - Energy
 - Gas line to Western Alaska
 - Statewide interconnected electric grid
 - Water & Sewer
 - This plank is simple – “No more honey buckets”
 - Building and maintaining water/sewer systems creates high quality, lasting jobs.
 - Communications
 - 4G mobile and 1G broadband, in every community, is the basic level of service that we Alaskans need and deserve, in order to exercise our right to exist in “Digital America/Alaska”
 - We also need to address the lack of competition in the Alaskan market, and attempts by certain companies to monopolize certain parts of the state.
- **Transportation**
 - Air Transportation
 - Safe and reliable air transportation is crucial to life in the Bush.
 - The Pandemic has revealed just how fragile those links really are. It's the result of lack of competition and lack of capital in the region.
 - I propose a public corporation structured, state operated, Bush airlines. This is a need that the “market” has proved it cannot

meet. Each time an airline goes bankrupt, thousands, if not several million dollars is lost, winding it down, and starting a new one up. Institutional knowledge, procedures, labor, and infrastructure are lost, too. People suffer because of the private market's inefficiencies, and we can avoid that.

- Centralization of operations and long term planning would be more efficient and so generate cost savings that would be passed on to passengers. The lack of a profit motive also means additional reductions to ticket costs. Schedules would be better integrated.
- Surface Transportation
 - We can connect the Bush to the Road System in a way that improves quality of life for everyone.
 - I would specifically look at creating a ground based link between Anchorage and 1) Bethel; 2) Nome; 3) Kotzebue.
 - I think it is worth having a conversation about road v. railroad v. nothing. I am not looking to impose something where it is not wanted, but I am curious to know what Alaskans think about the idea.
 - I know there are numerous issues with this:
 - Is a link wanted in these communities? What about the communities along the way? How do we balance the feelings of those that want connection and those that don't?
 - Initial costs, and maintenance costs are unknown right now
 - It also brings up a whole host of environmental concerns, that must be intricately balanced with the social needs of the area.
 - Road? Railroad? A mixture?
 - I've already addressed the AMHS. One additional proposal that I think is worth exploring is taking the concept of a "marine highway" and applying that to our rivers, in particular, the Yukon, and possibility the Kuskokwim, too. I could see this as a way to lessen the cost of living along the river, and also improving the flow of goods and services up and down its path.
- **Education as infrastructure**
 - There is good, stable work to be had in Rural Alaska. The problem is that, thus far as a state, we have done a poor job of creating jobs out here.
 - The result is "Brain Drain"

- Creating jobs in Rural Alaska begins with creating workers to fill those jobs. Today's first graders will be the "new hires" of 20 years from now.
 - Kids growing up in the Bush begin to form the decision, to stay or leave, from as soon as they become aware of Outside. Conversations about staying/returning home should be had early and often.
- We MUST home grow our own teachers. Our kids desperately need them.
 - Reward new teachers who return to the school system they graduated from, with drastically increased pay and benefits
- **Healthcare as infrastructure**
 - Like with education, the most important step is to develop our own, homegrown health care professionals.
 - Most communities in the Bush have unmet healthcare needs – some smaller, some have enormous needs. The problem is resources – both money and labor. The demand far outstrips supply.
 - A serious, but ignored, problem with rural healthcare is our reliance on travelling providers, as well as providers who only come up here on temporary assignments.
 - This reliance is especially problematic in the provision of mental health care, where a strong provider/patient bond is essential to successful treatment.
 - We need to also create an integrated, statewide system of tele-healthcare, including digital records sharing and retention systems.
 - We need to improve medical transport chains, for patients, for PPE and other supplies, and for prescriptions, which are currently fragmented, inefficient, and unreliable.
- **Child Care as Infrastructure**
 - The lack of quality, affordable childcare is one of the most significant barriers families like mine face in trying to achieve financial stability.
 - The lack of childcare is at crisis levels in the Bush.
 - Problems of both quantity and quality, in addition to cost.
 - Because wages are low, daycares face the constant threat of staff turnover.
 - Finding licensed providers is even more difficult
 - Licensing requirements are simply too expensive to meet
 - For those who desire to pursue a career in the industry, training and educational opportunities are limited.
 - Two quick proposals of mine are grants to help providers expand and scholarship program for our high school graduates looking to enter the field.
- **Social Safety net as Infrastructure: Decentralization of public assistance administration**
 - LOCAL CONTROL OF THE SAFETY NET
 - First, this is only a brainstorm, an idea I am just beginning to consider.

- What this looks like, to me, is delegating the management of the social safety net down to the regional, perhaps even local level. To some extent, this is already happening, though it's seem geared more towards administration, rather than actual management (resource allocation decisions and program design).
 - My line of thinking, right now, is towards block grants to Bush communities
 - Not intended to be “cheap” or in any manner reduce services and benefits.
 - Rather, the intent is to empower local communities in designing a version of the social safety net that is actually relevant to the needs of the people there. I believe cost savings will be the natural result of resources being distributed more efficiently. A person in need in Kwethluk faces a different situation than a person in need in Klawock. This idea is recognition of our geographical and social diversity.

- **Local Government as Infrastructure: Organize the Unorganized Borough**
 - The lack of governmental entities, with the power to plan and make decisions, on a regional level, is one of the most severe handicaps on rural economic development.
 - The primary excuse it that