**State Legislative Responses regarding affordable quality child care and early learning**

**Question:**
Will you advocate for state funding to allow all Alaskan families to access affordable quality child care and early learning? _High priority; _Medium priority; _Low priority; _Do not believe the state of Alaska should spend public money on this any year

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**Senate Seat**

- **Jesse Kiehl** **– High Priority** “On the Juneau Assembly, I worked to invest in both child care quality and availability: I voted to begin the HEARTS initiative and introduced and passed an ordinance relaxing zoning for both licensed homes and centers. During the last year I worked with advocates and my colleagues trying to get the Best Starts program on the ballot. As a legislative aide, I was privileged to work with Sen. Egan to establish the first $2 million statewide pre-K pilot project. I worked to defend that funding, along with state support for Best Beginnings, for many years—even through significant cuts to other state functions. That reflects how important early education is to Alaska’s future. But these small efforts aren’t enough to reach thousands of Alaska children. I look forward to working with Alaskans all across our state to expand opportunities for children and families.”

- **Don Etheridge** – Medium Priority “I believe we can find better ways to deal with child care and early learning besides just throwing money at the problem. Let’s work on ways to deal with this very important issue. I believe we need to spend the money needed to provide the services but we need to look at other option also to reduce the cost. Just throwing money at a situation is just a short term fix we need to look for long term solutions. Alaska has gotten really good at throwing money out there when we have it, but when oil prices drop we pull the rug out from under those that have become dependent on the services.”

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**House Seat District 34 – Mendenhall Valley**

- **Andi Story** - **High Priority** “Funding for early learning is an upfront investment in Alaskans that the Legislature and Governor can make now that will reduce the state budget in future years. It will help our workforce needs and result in more educated, engaged and healthy citizens. I will be outspoken in the need for this smart investment. Thank you for your longtime advocacy on behalf of our youngest citizens, their families and our communities.”

- **Jerry Nankervis** **– High Priority** No Comment

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**House Seat District 33 – Downtown/Douglas/Haines/Skagway**

- **Chris Dimond** – **High Priority** “I fully appreciate, understand and recognize the need for early childhood education. We need to ensure that we as legislators and citizens are funding education fully and in all capacities. Education funding is an investment in our future. Not doing so creates long term issues that affect our state in too many negative ways.”

- **Sara Hannan** – **High Priority** “This is a high priority for me and the future of Alaska. I talk about it every day....today at a retiree forum. For our long term benefit, early education and high quality child care is our most important investment.”

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**Note: While serving on the Juneau Assembly, Jesse Kiehl voted in favor of the Best Starts initiative. Jerry Nankervis voted against, and also voted not to allow the initiative to be put on the ballot for community input.**

Paid for by the Juneau Children’s Political Action Committee 3184 Pioneer Ave Juneau 99801. I am Kevin Ritchie, Treasurer of the Juneau Children’s PAC and I approve this message. Top contributors of the Juneau Children’s PAC are James Ayers, Kevin Ritchie, John Pugh all of Juneau, Alaska.