



#AncVotes by Mail

## Description

# Muni Election Hopes and Fears



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The ***Municipality of Anchorage*** is going to have another election on April 7, 2020 which will be determined by a mail-in ballot. This is depressing on many levels; 1) the low caliber of people currently holding a majority of Muni Assembly seats, 2) the need to again hold the election at a time in April guaranteed to restrain participation, and 3) the fact voters will receive a ballot in the mail and be expected to believe a federal postal carrier will deliver it to the Muni for counting—and it will be accurately counted.

**This election should be in November along with State and National elections. Why isn't it?**

Instead, Anchorage elections require a leap of faith. They are run as might be expected in a Third World country where many homeless and destitute people are offered as proof that property owners must pay more to the government for having their quality life.

*But my dread is based on experience: I have seen first-hand how elections can be manipulated—as an employee of a union of state employees. What I witnessed was shameful and it could happen here. I have zero confidence in the integrity of this election, although I have some hope for one of the candidates from my Eagle River/Chugiak suburb of Anchorage.<sup>1</sup> Others are also running that I am hopeful about, but my community has a mere two seats on the 11-seat Assembly and our candidates must be strong.*

**Jamie**

**Allard** is the strong candidate among three running. She could make the perfect force for Eagle River with the other current assembly person from here, **Crystal Kennedy**.





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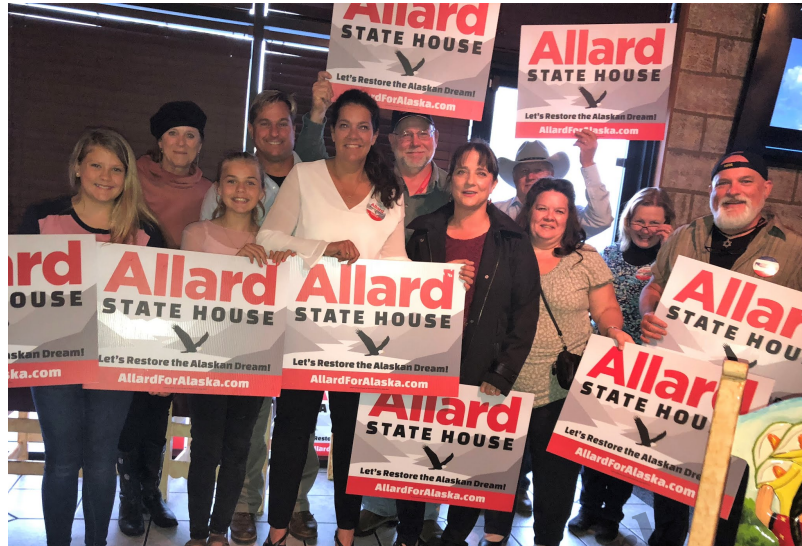
PAID FOR JAMIE ALLARD FOR ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY 20417 WILLIAMSBURG DRIVE EAGLE RIVER ALASKA 99577

Our election district includes *Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson (JBER)* and Allard's husband is military. A lot of my neighbors are active or retired military. They aren't impressed by blowhard politicians.

**Jamie Allard** is consistent.

I first met Allard when she was running for the *Alaska House of Representatives* to replace **Rep. Lora Reinbold**

, who ran for and was last elected to the *Alaska Senate*. Allard was a strong candidate in a three-way race and I expected her to win, but she lost.



Allard ran a strong campaign for the Alaska House of Representatives in 2018 and her husband and two daughters were active in promoting her efforts.

“I was disappointed at that loss,” explained Allard in a recent interview. “But I have continued to be involved; I realized I can make a difference and I needed to go forward. I had decided to run because I want a better place for my daughters. When they go off to college, I want them to have someplace worth coming back to.”

Family is important to Allard. Her two daughters are in 8<sup>th</sup> grade at *Gruening Middle School*, and 9<sup>th</sup> at *Eagle River High School*.

**Allard**  
continued: “If I had said ‘I don’t want to do this anymore after losing the House race, what message would that have sent to my daughters?’”

For background, Allard was in the military in the 1990s. She worked for the **Allied Supreme Commander** in Germany and had an interesting career. “But, because my husband is Special Forces, special operations, we hardly saw each other,” she explained. “He was farther along in his career and we agreed that one of us needed to support the other, because we never saw each other since we were both always deployed.”

**She**  
got out as a sergeant.

“His career was much further along than mine,” explained Allard. “He had a lot of responsibility and it meant a lot to have someone back home supporting him and keeping the home fires burning. That was what I needed to do.”

Allard didn’t just keep the home fires burning, she also had a position at the *US State Department* working in 4-person teams to influence world leaders around Russia about the values Americans hold dear at top secret conferences over six years. Then she and her husband chose to live and raise their family in Eagle River.

They are invested.

**Our**  
biggest issues here are “Crime, taxes, the homelessness that is spilling over from Anchorage,” explained Allard. “I believe if we can enforce those laws that are already on the books we can reduce the homelessness and rising crime in our communities.”

*Without  
more taxes?*



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“The current Assembly is going to continue proposing taxes until voters submit,” said Allard. “I don’t believe we need new taxes because they haven’t worked hard enough to reduce our budget. We now have a \$40 million increase in the budget, which is a record high for the Municipality, and instead of putting in the work to cut the budget all I saw them do is increase it.”

*Won’t  
that make you a lone voice on the Assembly?*

**“You can be a lone voice and still make a difference,” Allard continued, “because when you get the word out to the public they become engaged. They get angry when they see what’s going on. So, if there isn’t anyone there to point out what is going on, and declare “enough is enough,” then other conservative people will not decide to run for the assembly.**

“That is what I am going to do to make a difference. I will fight the fight as long as I need to if Eagle River elects me,” she added.

**Allard is reviewing the recently released Muni Internal Audit now.**<sup>2</sup> She acknowledges she will have to trust the integrity of the Muni election. Another elected official who lives in this area—who is now a legislator representing Chugiak District 13—told me in 2017 in another interview, of her distrust of the local mail-in ballot.



Sharon Jackson ran for Lt. Governor in the 2018 Alaska Election and spoke at a candidate forum in Eagle River.

I interviewed **Sharon Jackson** about the coming mail-in ballot in December of 2017 for the **ECHO Magazine**, which refused to publish that story.

As I reported then:

The **Muni Clerk's Office** back then had this list of benefits of a mail-in ballot. Now they simply list favorable news stories on the Muni.org web page:

**Benefits of Vote by Mail elections:**

- Keeps regular voters engaged.
- Encourages new voter participation.
- Centralizes and streamlines election administration.
- Increases transparency in the election process.
- Presents no partisan advantage.
- Protects voters' right to a secret ballot.
- Uses signature verification to arrest attempts at voting fraud.
- Uses technology to inform voters about the status of their ballot."

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**“Heck-of-a-deal, huh?: No more having to plan your day around going to the polling place in your district to vote. No more standing in line chatting with other responsible voters there to do their civic duty. No more going into a booth alone and marking your candidate and municipal spending priorities with a curtain closed behind you. No more “I Have Voted!” sticker to encourage others to make that same effort.”**

*Ms.*

*Jackson registered her concern:*

“When I first got this (Municipality of Anchorage ballot) in the mail I was shocked,” stated Sharon Jackson. “It took a little time to wrap my mind around it, okay?”

Mrs. Jackson and her husband own their Eagle River home and have lived in it 15 years. The person this ballot was addressed to moved out of state 10 years ago and died five years ago.

“The scary part is she may have been voting in local elections all these years!” exclaimed Mrs. Jackson. “If someone without integrity receives something like this, what is to keep them from voting it?”

*So, what do you think others **having integrity** should do if they receive a ballot for the upcoming election in the mail, Mrs. Jackson?*

“They should definitely contact the Municipality,” she said. “This is a new way to vote; there are no experts in doing it this way.”

**A second mail-in ballot for the previous homeowner arrived at Mrs. Jackson’s mailbox after this interview. She has contacted the Municipality about it.**



Since then Mrs. Jackson has become a legislator, appointed to District 13 by **Gov. Michael Dunleavy**—after the candidate who won that election **Nancy Dahlstrom** decided to not take the seat she was elected to in November—and instead accepted a job as Commissioner of the **Department of Corrections**. Rep. Jackson will have to run for re-election and fortunately the State of Alaska does not have mail-in ballots.

**Elections are a sacred trust.** When I personally worked as a business agent for a union, elections were a way for some to protect self-serving interests. Those elections featured mail-in ballots, sent out from the organization to everyone who is listed on the roll as a member. Voters in those elections simply took out a ballot card from the envelope, marked it and placed it into another unmarked envelope, before then mailing it back in a business reply envelop with their name and return address written on it.

**In this kind of arrangement it doesn't matter who gets the most votes; what matters is who separates and counts the votes from returned business reply envelopes with individual voter names on them.**

*In addition to Jamie Allard, other local candidates for the **Anchorage Assembly** who I would vote for (if I could) in the coming election are: **Christine Hill**, District 4, Seat G, Midtown; and **Rick Castillo**, District 6, Seat K, South Anchorage. I don't know enough about the others running to advise on who to vote for. As the largest expenditure of the **Anchorage Municipality**, the **Anchorage School District** also has two candidates for **ASD School Board** the upcoming election. I recommend voting for **Dave Donley** and **JC Cates** in those areawide races.*

Anchorage is long overdue for a political realignment and this election could be a start. If you agree, copy this link and send to your friends:



Rep. Sharron Jackson

<https://donnliston.net/2020/02/anchvotes-by-mail.html>

**References:**

1 <http://www.muni.org/Departments/Assembly/Clerk/Elections/Pages/default.aspx>

2 [http://www.muni.org/Departments/internal\\_audit/Pages/AuditReportsbyDepartment.aspx](http://www.muni.org/Departments/internal_audit/Pages/AuditReportsbyDepartment.aspx)

**Category**

1. ALASKA! ELECTIONS
2. Los Anchorage

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