

# Know Before You Go: AK-AL District Primer

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**In the last election, 23rd-term Republican Don Young won this district by 44,069 votes (14.3%).**

With your help, we're going to win this seat for the Democrats in 2018.

## About the Incumbent

**Introduction:** Republican Don Young has represented Alaska's sole congressional district since 1973. This is his 23rd straight term, making him the longest currently serving member of the House of Representatives. Young is a long-time advocate for the interests of industry and development in Alaska. As a freshman congressman in 1973 he championed the Trans-Alaska pipeline.

**Issues:** Young is anti-choice and anti-gun-control. He is a strong proponent of opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling. Under Trump, Young introduced a bill that would enable cruel hunting methods such as aerial hunting and killing animals in their dens as they hibernated in Alaska's National Wildlife refuges.

**Recent Elections:** In 2016, Young defeated Democrat Steve Lindbeck and Libertarian Jim McDermott with 50.3% of the vote. In 2014, he defeated Democrat Forrest Dunbar and Libertarian Jim McDermott with 51% of the vote. The closest race in recent years was in 2008, when Young defeated Ethan Berkowitz, presently the mayor of Anchorage, by a margin of 5% (50% to 45%).

**Strengths:** Young's strengths include advocacy for Alaska's indigenous communities and his support from transportation unions. He supports legalizing marijuana and holds a leadership position on the newly formed House Cannabis Caucus.

**Potential Weaknesses:** Young has weathered ethics investigations over an undisclosed partial ownership in California agricultural property and allegations of campaign fund misuse and earmark misuse. In 2005, Young and his fellow senator Ted Stevens earmarked \$223 million in federal funds for the notorious Gravina Island Bridge, which became known as the "Bridge to Nowhere," now universal shorthand for wasteful government spending.

## About the Challenger

**Introduction:** Alyse S. Galvin is an Alaska native whose largely blue-collar family moved there during WWII and struggled with poverty and its related ills. Galvin broke that cycle to attend UCSD where she majored in political science before returning to Alaska to raise four children and teach at a community school. Entrepreneurial and success-oriented, she has also run multiple small businesses and a hotel. Galvin also worked with Best Beginnings, a public-private education partnership, and at Great Alaska Schools, a grassroots activist organization.

**Issues:** Galvin supports net neutrality and wants to capitalize on local economic advantages in tourism and shipping. She supports the ACA and CHIP, as well as a woman's right to choose, Social Security, and Medicare. She wants to improve public education by ensuring federal funding for it. She supports family sick leave and other social programs, as well as student debt relief. Galvin wants to expand the use of renewable energy but recognizes the need for responsible use of existing Alaskan fossil fuel, mineral and fishery resources. She is highly skeptical of offshore drilling and is opposed to the Pebble Mine project that could adversely affect the Bristol Bay watershed. Galvin wants to rein in Trump's foreign policy initiatives that put Alaska at risk and to tackle the opioid epidemic in the state.

**Strengths:** Galvin is an independent who won her spot on the Democratic ticket thanks to strong support from the education community. She is not accepting corporate PAC money. She is endorsed by the National Women's Political Caucus, Planned Parenthood Action Fund, Social Security Works, End Citizens United, The Alaska Center, the NEA, and multiple unions including IBEW. Despite her lack of political experience, the one poll conducted in June showed her trailing her 45-year-incumbent by only 6 points, and she has raised 75% of Young's fundraising total.



## AK-AL: Facts & Stats

### Population Centers

- Anchorage, 298,695
- Fairbanks North Star Borough, 99,631
- Juneau and Borough, 32,756 (state capital)
- Wasilla City, 9,284
- Sitka City & Borough, 8,863
- Ketchikan, 8,197

### 2016 Presidential Results

- Clinton: 116K (37%)
- Trump: 163K (51%)

### 2016 House Results

- Lindbeck (D): 111K (36%)
- Young (R): 155K (50%)
- Other: 42K (14%)
- Registered, didn't vote: 220K
- Eligible, not registered: 66K

### 2014 House Results

- Dunbar (D): 115K (41%)
- Young (R): 143K (51%)
- Other: 21K (8%)
- Registered, didn't vote: 231K

## AK-AL: Better Know a District

### Geography

AK-AL is the largest congressional district in the nation and one of the largest electoral districts in the world. More than 60% of Alaska's land is owned by the federal government, including areas such as Tongass National Forest, Denali National Park and Preserve, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and the National Petroleum Reserve–Alaska (NPR-A).

### Citizenry

According to 2015 data, white Alaskans are the majority at 66.5% of the population. American Indian and Alaska Natives are the second largest group at 14.8%. Economically, Alaska is a mix of blue-collar and service employees throughout the state and white-collar tech and healthcare industries in the population centers Anchorage and Fairbanks. Alaska's smaller communities are spread along the coasts and inland with great distances between them. Voter registration as of November 2016 showed a total of 528,879 voters, with 52.62% registered as "unaffiliated."

### Elections

Alaska has voted for the GOP presidential candidate in every election but one since 1960. The sole exception was 1964, when Alaska's three electoral votes went to Lyndon Johnson. In 2012, 41% of the voters chose Barack Obama, a 3% increase in their support for him over 2008. In 2016, Hillary Clinton saw a 4% decline in voter support compared to Obama in 2012. In the caucus vote for the 2016 Democratic primary in March, Alaska gave Bernie Sanders 79.6% of the vote — his largest win outside of his home state of Vermont. At the state level, Democrats attained the State House majority in the 2016 election. Democrat Ethan A. Berkowitz was elected mayor of Anchorage in 2015.

### Higher Education

Alaska has 12 colleges and universities, two technical institutions, and one theological seminary. The largest is the University of Alaska system, with campuses in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau and extended campuses in Sitka and Ketchikan. Each of the three main UAA campuses has an Alaska Young Democrats club.

### Industries

The leading industries are fishing and seafood processing, tourism, and oil. Declining oil production, increasing tax-deductible costs, and a fall in oil prices resulted in employment losses in that industry and its related sectors (including state government) in the last months of 2015 and continuing in 2016.

### Tourism

Tourism has consistently grown in Alaska. The primary tourism season is from mid-May to mid-September. Tourist activities include skiing, mountain biking, kayaking, and participation in the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. Approximately half of all visitors coming to Alaska arrive by cruise ship.