Ben Kolendo

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POLITICAL CONSULTANT

Youth policy advocate, political strategist, and registered lobbyist with experience across legislative advocacy, education governance, and public-sector advising. Founder of a youth-focused advocacy and consulting firm working at the intersection of policy development, civic engagement, and institutional accountability. Background includes state-level health policy advising, campaign leadership, and international academic study.

SKILLS & STRENGTHS

Legislative Advocacy – Government Relations – Policy Research – Campaign Strategy – Governance Ethics – Public Speaking – Coalition Building – Mediation – Strategic Communications

POLITICAL & ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION

Collaborate with local and national advocacy organizations on voter engagement and youth participation efforts:

- Democratic National Committee (DNC) – Campaign and organizational collaboration
- Indivisible NGO & PAC – Civic engagement and political organization initiatives

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Award recipient for leadership and advocacy in youth representation and civic engagement.

EDUCATION

The American University of Paris
Paris, France
Bachelor of Arts *(double major)*
International Comparative Politics
History, Law, and Society
Graduation: 2029

Mat-Su Career & Technical High School
Wasilla, Alaska
High School Diploma
Specialization in Aviation Transportation
Graduation: 2024

Blue River Aviation
Palmer, Alaska
Private Pilot License (PPL)
Graduation: 2022

EXTRA CURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT

Student Advisory Board / Student Government Association –
Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District
2019 – 2024

Varsity Basketball Cheer Leading –
Wasilla High School
2023 – 2024

Model United Nations –
American University of Paris
2025 – 2026

Student Government Association –
American University of Paris
2026 – Present

REFERENCES

Available on request.

POLICY, GOVERNANCE, POLITICAL EXPERIENCE

Founder, President, & Lead Lobbyist – Kolendo Collective LLC

2024 – Present

- Founded and lead a youth-focused advocacy, lobbying, and consulting firm dedicated to protecting youth civic participation, free speech, and representation in government.
- Author of the Alaska Campaign Handbook, a comprehensive and legally compliant guide for first-time and local candidates covering campaign structure, fundraising, compliance, messaging, and voter outreach in Alaska.
- Conduct legislative outreach, policy advocacy, and coalition-building with elected officials, agencies, and community organizations.
- Advise candidates and advocacy groups on governance standards, ethical compliance, and civic engagement strategy.

Student Body President – Student Government Association (SGA), American University of Paris

2026 – Present

- Elected to represent AUP's undergraduate student body and lead the SGA.
- Lead student advocacy and represent student interests to university leadership.
- Oversee SGA governance, committees, legislation, budget priorities, and institutional initiatives.

Committee Chair – Alaska Department of Health (DOH) Children's Mental Health Initiative (CMHI)

2024 – Present

- Chair the CMHI Advisory Committee, leading statewide youth mental health policy discussions and reform recommendations.
- Help oversee grant priorities and resource allocation to ensure funding is directed toward high-impact, evidence-based programs.
- Coordinate with DOH leadership, committee members, and community partners on priorities and funding direction.

Children and Youth Behavioral Health and Substance Abuse Prevention Advisor – Alaska Department of Health (DOH)

2021 – Present

- Advise policy makers, committees, and partner organizations on youth behavioral health and substance abuse prevention policy and programming.
- Deliver public presentations and outreach to promote healthy behaviors and awareness of youth behavioral health issues.
- Support youth-focused public health initiatives through policy input, outreach, and collaboration.

Student Representative, Student Ombudsman, School Board Member – Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District

2020 – 2024

- Elected by students to represent districtwide student interests for four consecutive years.
- Served as Student Ombudsman, acting as an independent advocate for students navigating disputes of rights with district/school administrations.
- Served as a sitting member of the school board, participating in governance, policy deliberations, and public decision-making, including oversight of nearly $1.5 billion in cumulative district budgets.
- Advocated for student representation, ethical governance, and institutional transparency.

Candidate for School Board – Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District

2024

- Ran a districtwide campaign focused on restoring student representation, improving governance standards, restructuring district financials, and increasing public trust in education leadership.
- Led fundraising, voter outreach, public communications, and campaign operations.

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Restaurant FOH Staff	**Program Lead**	**Barista**
2023 – 2025	2021 – 2023	2021 – 2022
Yoga Instructor	**Podcast Host**	**Shop Hand**
2023 – 2025	2021 – 2023	2022