



Alaska State Legislature House and Senate Democrats

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE • February 19, 2004

Democratic Legislators Call For Committee of the Whole *Legislature should debate recommendations from Conference of Alaskans*

JUNEAU – In twin letters delivered to Republican leaders this afternoon, House and Senate Democratic Leaders Senator Johnny Ellis (D-Anchorage) and Representative Ethan Berkowitz (D-Anchorage) today called on Senate President Gene Therriault (R-North Pole) and Speaker of the House Pete Kott (R-Eagle River) to convene a “Committee of the Whole” in the Alaska State Senate and House of Representatives. If Republican leadership embraced the request, the committee would debate delegate recommendations from Governor Frank Murkowski’s Conference of Alaskans, held last week in Fairbanks.

“Now that the Legislature has formally received the resolutions and letter from the Conference of Alaskans,” the letters read, “It is our belief that an open, public debate on the floor... as a Committee of the Whole would best facilitate a discussion of what should go before the voters and best inform the voters of our intentions.

“Several pieces of legislation that speak to the issues have already been introduced and could serve as a starting point. We should have spirited debate on all of these measures in the open. Shaping the final package in a Committee of the Whole would be more efficient than the normal committee process.”

Drawing inspiration from the open nature of the debate at the Conference of Alaskans, Democratic Legislators remain committed to addressing the state’s fiscal problems head-on, considering every tool available, before supporting any single component of a fiscal plan. The Committee of the Whole is an invaluable venue for such discussions.

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Sen. Bettye Davis, Sen. Johnny Ellis, Sen. Kim Elton, Sen. Lyman Hoffman, Sen. Hollis French, Sen. Gretchen Guess, Sen. Georgianna Lincoln, Sen. Donny Olson, Rep. Ethan Berkowitz, Rep. Sharon Cissna, Rep. Harry Crawford, Rep. Eric Croft, Rep. Les Gara, Rep. Max Gruenberg, Rep. David Guttenberg, Rep. Reggie Joule, Rep. Mary Kapsner, Rep. Beth Kerttula, Rep. Albert Kookesh, Rep. Carl Moses