



## Alaska State Legislature House and Senate Democrats

WEB: <http://www.akdemocrats.org>  
CONTACT: Jordan Marshall, Press Secretary  
PHONE: (907) 269-0133 or 321-3682  
FAX: (907) 269-0132  
EMAIL: [press@akdemocrats.org](mailto:press@akdemocrats.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE • October 5, 2004**

### ***Setting the Record Straight: A Rebuttal to Murkowski's "Progress Report"***

ANCHORAGE – Governor Frank Murkowski late last month distributed a 16-page self-congratulatory evaluation booklet around the state. The full-color, magazine quality publication is optimistically called "A Return to Common Sense". The publication painted a rosy picture of the governor's first eighteen months in office. Not surprisingly, the governor fared quite well when viewed from his own perspective. Alaska's Democratic Legislators in the State House and Senate see things differently, and today released their own web-based version of the events that took place over the 18-months since Murkowski took office.

"The governor's report required a rebuttal to set the record straight," said Senate Democratic Leader Johnny Ellis (D-Anchorage). "It was so one-sided and riddled with omissions, we decided the public deserved another perspective. We put our heads together and quickly came up with a list of actions that didn't make the governor's list."

"A return to common sense?" asked House Democratic Leader Ethan Berkowitz (D-Anchorage). "Well, at least we know where he's trying to go, and hope he gets there more often in the last two years of his term than he did in the first two."

The governor's document says it wasn't printed at government expense, but doesn't disclose how it was printed or how many were made. "We respectfully request to immediately know who paid his printing costs," said Berkowitz.

"We have always said we would work with the Governor whenever possible, and hold him accountable when necessary," said Ellis. "This document shows that holding him accountable is too often necessary."

"A Return to Common Sense? Setting the Record Straight" can be viewed below or found online at [http://www.akdemocrats.org/murkowski\\_report\\_card.htm](http://www.akdemocrats.org/murkowski_report_card.htm)

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### ***Putting Alaskans First • Moving Alaska Forward 2004***

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



### **Setting the Record Straight:**



Governor Frank Murkowski

## A rebuttal to Murkowski's "Progress Report" from the Democratic Legislators in the Alaska House and Senate

We hope you take Governor Frank Murkowski's "progress report" with a grain of salt. He would like Alaskans to believe he has moved forward with his agenda for Alaska. In a way he has. He's made it harder for kids to get to school, easier for lobbyists to exert influence, harder for senior citizens to make ends meet, and easier for his commissioners to make decisions out of the public eye. He thought it was appropriate to buy a jet with Homeland Security funds. The Governor raised taxes on ordinary Alaskans and made cuts to public safety. We're just not sure where this governor's priorities lie.

Join with us as we review the judgment and decisions Frank Murkowski has made during the last 18-months.

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## Education

A good education is the foundation for future success. Frank Murkowski was reluctant to invest any new money in Alaska schools until parents and teachers, faced with a looming school funding crisis, forced his hand. Murkowski claims credit for \$82 million in education funding that he threatened several times to veto. Murkowski's real vision for education? In just 18 months he:

☒ Cut community schools and forced districts to cancel most programs.

☒ Eliminated the Alyeska Central School, the state's top performance, No Child Left Behind-compliant correspondence school.

☒ Claimed successes in education during a time of regional funding adequacy lawsuit (NEA-Alaska).

☒ Exempted the Department of Education commissioner from repaying retirement benefits before coming to work.

☒ Cut \$10 million in school busing -- money that districts must take out of the classroom to get kids to school.

☒ Cut \$4 million from kindergarten for young children.

☒ Took credit for a University of Alaska land grant that happened before he took office.

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## University of Alaska

Frank Murkowski tries to take credit for a land grant to the university that happened in 2000 – two years before he took office. Murkowski also claims he invested in the University of Alaska just as he promised during his campaign. But he used accounting tricks that would take away this year's 5 percent increase next year. Only after university students and concerned Alaskans forced the issue did he approve the money for real. And Murkowski opposed paying for increased retirement costs for the University. It was only through the insistence of Democrats in the legislature that the money didn't come out of the classroom.

## A Return to Common Sense?

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#### **Murkowski vs. Alaska seniors and elders**

Frank Murkowski seems to have a hard time respecting senior Alaskans who pioneered our infrastructure and achieved statehood. When Murkowski took office, the Longevity Bonus was being phased out, costing \$5 million less every year. But Murkowski used his veto pen to pull the rug out from under our grandparents. Murkowski:

- ☒ Vetoed Longevity Bonus.
- ☒ Refused to allow seniors access to affordable Canadian prescription drugs.
- ☒ Changed Medicaid regulations for seniors and disabled Alaskans.
- ☒ Tinkered with the rules for reimbursing assisted living homes (many now fear they will go out of business).
- ☒ Cut respite care services and raised the Pioneers Home rates (even though the Legislature appropriated enough money to prevent this increase).

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#### **Bad judgment in appointments**

Whether it's inflating his personal staff and increasing their salaries or putting political friends in positions of power, in just 18 months Frank Murkowski has:

- ☒ Created appointment snafus such as tapping ethically challenged Randy Ruedrich to head the AOGCC while he still chaired the Republican Party of Alaska.

- ☒ Appointed 10 percent of the legislature (the only ones who have run in a competitive race, so far, have lost); offered sitting lawmakers positions in his administration; and "unappointed" Jim Elkins after he criticized the Governor for his veto of the Longevity Bonus.
- ☒ Increased the staff roster in the governor's office, conveniently using salary cap overrides -- this includes the administration hiring Robin Taylor, Mike Miller, Dave Donely, John Torgerson, Alan Austerman, Gayle Phillips, Sean Parnell, Bill Hudson, and Janette James... and a consultant who discouraged the governor from pursuing MidAmerican's offer to build a natural gas pipeline.
- ☒ Picked a fight with the Alaska Judicial Council to plant a favorite on the bench.
- ☒ Submitted a bill to move middle-management level of state employees out of union representation and into political-appointee status.

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### **Show us the Money!** *or Murkowski vs. Your Wallet*

Frank Murkowski campaigned against state taxes. Remember his reassuring rhetoric that resource development alone would bring us to the Promised Land? Remember when any time the phrase "fiscal plan" was mentioned, Frank countered, "Watch out for your wallet"? It seems that the moment Murkowski got into office, all promises went out the window. And where did Frank focus his tax increases? He went after your car, your PFD, and small businesses, while offering oil companies tax breaks on wells they were already planning to drill. Here's a run-down. Murkowski:

- ☒ Reneged on campaign promises of no taxes by proposing taxes, more taxes and the disingenuous "user fees" (small business tax, studded tire tax, sales tax, wildlife viewing tax, and more).
- ☒ Urged PFD changes including suggesting the Alaska Permanent Fund Corporation be used to induce business investment in Alaska.
- ☒ He said, "No dipping into the PFD for government," yet proffered this as the Number One alternative for closing the fiscal gap (even with optimistic POMV management, this would still have caused reduction of PFDs).

- ☒ Called a desperate special session to revisit his take-the-Permanent-Fund-oproposal; the Legislature adjourned out from under him.
- ☒ Repeatedly paraded Scenario B budget threats and then backed away.
- ☒ Eliminated of the capital match program, municipal revenue sharing, community matching grants, and safe communities - all of which mean higher local taxes in the form of sales property taxes.
- ☒ Gutted voter-approved campaign donation limits, doubling the allowable amounts as well as letting paid lobbyists hold fundraisers.
- ☒ Eliminated the capital match program, municipal revenue sharing, community matching grants, and safe communities – all of which mean reduced public services or higher local taxes in the form of sales and property taxes.

## A Return to Common Sense?

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### Broken Promises

Some politicians will say anything to get elected. Alaska's governor:

- ☒ Failed to follow through on campaign promises to veto policy changes to Denali KidCare, taking health insurance away from pregnant women and children.
- ☒ Failed to follow through on campaign promises to hold harmless Alaska's reproductive health policies.
- ☒ Failed to follow through on campaign promises to protect APOC regulations.
- ☒ Failed to follow through on campaign promises of no new taxes (see above).
- ☒ Failed to follow through on campaign promises to protect the Permanent Fund (see above).

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### Economic Development?

When Murkowski talks about economic development and



bringing our resources to market, everybody stands up and says amen. But what has he really accomplished? He let one of the best prospects for an Alaska natural gas pipeline walk away. He moved a state agency out of a city that didn't vote for him and into a town that did... at increased cost to the entire state. The governor:

- ☒ Failed to win White House support for key natural gas pipeline incentives.
- ☒ Stalled, then fumbled the MidAmerican multibillion-dollar proposal to finance and build our natural gas pipeline.
- ☒ Diverted ANWR advocacy dollars from Arctic Power to the governor's office.
- ☒ Ordered the ferry system headquarters to move to Ketchikan, incurring costs, uprooting families, and causing a loss of valuable experience.
- ☒ Reversed voter-approved minimum wage inflation proofing.
- ☒ Eliminated the Alaska Science & Technology Foundation, an economic and educational engine for job creation in the state.

## A Return to Common Sense?

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### **Danger Ahead: Dirty Water, Dead Fish**

Nobody wants Alaska to be exclusively a national park. We need to use our resources to create jobs. But Frank Murkowski seems to think the difference between progress and stagnation is the buffer zone between loggers and a salmon stream. Maybe someday when Murkowski's water policies muddy the image our salmon have in the market, Frank Murkowski will see that dirty water and dead fish mean fewer jobs and less trade. But that will be too late. Murkowski:

- ☒ Axed the Habitat Division and moved permitting to DNR; both increased costs and endangered our fisheries.
- ☒ Defanged the Coastal Zone Management program by stripping local control from communities.
- ☒ Proposed DEC regulations to allow pollution mixing zones in salmon spawning areas, a plan in direct contradiction to Alaska's health and quality seafood marketing image.
- ☒ Signed the 2003 shallow gas leasing legislation that steamrolled the rights of property owners.

☒ Attempted to squash public interest litigants (the courts stopped him).

☒ Endorsed a plan to gag state biologists so commissioners would speak with "one voice", and limited public comment at DEC to boot.

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### Breaking Faith with Rural Alaska

Being Alaska's governor means looking out for all Alaskans. But Frank Murkowski's policies have a greater negative impact on some citizens than others. Alaska's villages and small towns are vibrant threads in the fabric of our great state. So why does Frank Murkowski want to cut them off? Murkowski endorsed:

☒ Regionalization and budget cuts for Village Public Safety Officers (VPSOs)

☒ Eliminated grants for safe communities (no money for local cops and firefighters)

☒ Announced a \$5 million bulk fuel assistance program for rural communities that morphed into a loan program for a handful of villages -- little help for rural communities struggling with dramatic fuel cost increases.

☒ Pushed regionalization of tribes and may seize jurisdiction over Native child welfare cases from tribal courts, forcing tribes to petition the U.S. Secretary of Interior to have any say in local cases

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### Murkowski vs. Needy Alaskans

Even as Murkowski pursues taxes that hit the poor harder than the rich, and even as he makes it harder for our senior citizens to make ends meet, Frank Murkowski is making sure the state does less to help the neediest among us. Although his own attorney general acknowledges the enormity of Alaska's substance abuse problem, Frank Murkowski cut drug and alcohol treatment. And taking away health insurance for children and pregnant women wasn't enough – the governor decided to slash funding for domestic violence shelters, too. Murkowski's brand of "compassionate conservatism" saw him:

☒ Endorse cuts to the Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual

Assault, mental health treatment, and alcohol prevention programs.

☒ Reduce the Human Services Matching Grant Program (programs that lost funding included Camp Fire, Boys & Girls Club, Alzheimer's Agency, STAR, ARC of Anchorage, Salvation Army Maternity Outpatient Services).

☒ Require alcoholism treatment non-profits to match state alcoholism grants with a 25 percent instead of 10 percent, which Salvation Army and others say is unreasonable.

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### **Murkowski's Dog and Pony Shows**

We've heard some people joke that Frank Murkowski must eat at Burger King a lot. He doesn't do well if he can't get things his way. When things aren't going his way he resorts to coercion and bully tactics. Some examples include:

☒ Called the "Conference of Alaskans" when his Permanent Fund-only plan for solving the fiscal gap lost traction in the Legislature, he relied on others to pay the costs, and then abandoned most of the panel's recommendations

☒ And when that didn't work, he called the Legislature into a underwhelming Special Session

☒ And when that didn't work, he fired his public relations staff because of concerns about his image and message. Go figure.



