ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY
OF ALASKA STATEHOOD

Senator Lisa Murkowski

PRESENTS

EXCERPTS FROM THE 1958 SENATE STATEHOOD DEBATE AND PRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S PROCLAMATION ADMITTING ALASKA TO THE UNION

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Statement from Senator Murkowski

Fifty years ago, hope and excitement were running high in the United States Senate as lawmakers approached the final hours of a marathon debate on Alaska statehood. On June 30, 1958, after six days of spirited debate, the Alaska Statehood Act was put to a vote, and it passed overwhelmingly – 64 to 20 with 12 members not voting. Since the United States House of Representatives had already approved the legislation, the Senate action sent the measure to the White House where President Eisenhower signed it into law on July 7, 1958. Alaska was formally admitted as a state with full congressional representation by Presidential proclamation on January 3, 1959.

As our 50th anniversary commences this year and next, Alaskans will be recalling our past, marking our achievements and anticipating our future. In thinking about our history, I've been perusing the Congressional Record to get a sense of the Senate debate that preceded Alaska's entry into the American Union. As a life-long Alaskan, I've found the record fascinating – enthusiastic, even passionate, arguments in favor of statehood countered by lawmakers who saw Alaska's entry into the Union as a huge, even "dangerous," mistake. So, if you are also interested in celebrating Alaska's 50th, I invite you to peruse the following pages, which contain notable excerpts from the original Senate floor debate on the Alaska Statehood Act from 1958.

As a foretaste, below are the principal arguments that were advanced against Alaskan Statehood. As you read them, try thinking how you would respond if you were defending Alaska on the floor of the Senate:

- Alaska is a territory with a poorly developed and very unsound economy,
- Giving federal land to a new State of Alaska would be an unnecessary and excessive "giveaway,"
- The new State of Alaska would be a financial burden on the Federal government,
- The admission of Alaska would set a precedent for the admission of noncontiguous areas, whose customs and traditions have non-American roots, and
- Alaska's small population does not warrant representation by two Senators

Statehood proponents, who effectively won the debate after the votes were tallied, had rejoinders to all of these arguments as well as passionate appeals to the advancement of democracy and the principle of representative government. I hope that the excerpts contained in this booklet are an inspiration in a time when the first principles of our Nation sometimes seem distant and hazy.

Born in Ketchikan, I was just a year old when Alaska became a state, so I have grown up with the blessings of Statehood. As our Golden Anniversary approaches, I join Alaskans in celebrating our 50th birthday. Alaska is proud to be "the Great Land" in the greatest Nation in the world, and I am privileged to represent its people in the United States Senate.

Senator James Edward Murray (D - Montana)

Mr. President, in our great Union of States, the admission of a new state always is a momentous and historic event.

On 30 separate occasions the Congress of the United States, pursuant to the powers granted to it in the Constitution, has acted favorably on bills similar in intent and purpose to the measure now before us for the admission of Alaska. As a result, 35 states have been admitted to the Union on the free and equal basis established by the Founding Fathers.

Our history and our present greatness show that our predecessors in Congress acted wisely. They did not make a mistake in any one of those 30 instances. Statehood never has failed. The admission of each of the 35 States, no matter how distant or noncontiguous it seemed, nor how undeveloped its resources or sparse its population, relatively, at times, invariably and unfailingly has added to our strength as a Nation and contributed to the richness of our national life. Statehood has invariably and unfailingly brought great economic and political development to the people of each new state.

Let me emphasize the fact that statehood never once has failed. Always has it enriched and strengthened our Nation. Always has it proved a benefit to the people of the new State, greatly stimulating their growth and development, both economically and politically.

ESTABLISH FREEDOM AT DOOR OF RUSSIAN IMPERIALISM

Each of these occasions of the admissions of new states, spanning 121 years from the admission of Vermont in 1791 through that of Arizona in 1912, has been of historic significance to the United States. But none of the 35 instances has been more freighted with destiny, has been of more potential epoch-making significance, than the admission of Alaska.

As members of the Senate know, less than 3 miles of shallow sea separate the American Island of Little Diomede from the Russian Island of Big Diomede. The mainland of communist Siberia is only about 50 miles distant across the Bering Straits from the mainland of free America. By granting to our quarter of a million fellow Americans in Alaska full citizenship, on a basis of full equality, we would be extending our great American system to the very edge of the Soviet empire. We would end colonialism and establish freedom and equality at the very door to totalitarianism and imperialism.

Statehood for Alaska would say to all the peoples of all the world far louder than mere words, that we are a Nation that practices what it preaches with respect to freedom and equality. Statehood for Alaska would be irrefutable proof that American democracy is a living, dynamic force in the world today, that it is not static; but that, on the contrary, America is still advancing as a great democratic Nation.

Mr. President, before concluding, I wish to touch on another aspect of Alaskan statehood in answer to a question which very likely will be asked. That question is: Why should the Alaskans have statehood? They are better off under the Federal Government.

The very same question could well have been asked concerning the aspirations of the people of any of the States admitted subsequent to the formation of the Union, including those of the people of my own great state of Montana in 1889.

In the case of each of the states that have been admitted in the manner now sought by the one-quarter million American citizens of Alaska, the same question could have been posed: why should they have statehood? They are better off under the Federal Government.

FREEDOM THE CORNERSTONE OF THE AMERICAN TRADITION

The facts with respect to all of these States speak for themselves. I am glad that each of the other 34 States was admitted, and I hope the Senators from those states join me in being glad that Montana was admitted.

However forcefully the facts with respect to the reasons why Alaska should be admitted to statehood speak for themselves in the light of our history and our unvarying precedents with respect to incorporated Territories, I should like to touch briefly upon 1 or 2 points in specific answer to the question of why there should be statehood for Alaska.

For a more complete discussion, with Supreme Court, citations of the status of incorporated Territories, I refer Members of the Senate to the committee reports on the Alaska statehood bills reported favorably by the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs in the 81st, 82nd, 83rd, and 85th Congresses.

But the primary reason statehood should be granted to Alaska is that the cornerstone of our American tradition is freedom-freedom to be governed by officials of our own choosing; freedom to participate, on a basis of equality, in the formulation of the laws and policies under which we live.

There is not a scintilla of doubt in my mind, or in the minds of any other members of the committee, I believe, that the overwhelming majority of the people of Alaska want statehood, want it with whole hearts, and want it now. They have fulfilled every historic requirement for statehood, and it is statehood they want, and not any other status.

TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION

Alaskans pay the same taxes into the Federal Treasury that the constituents of every member of this body pays. Yet Alaskans have no voice whatever in the levying of such taxes, or in the manner in which the tax monies are spent.

Alaskans are subject to the same military service to which our sons are subject. Yet they have no voice whatever in the making of war, or in the writing of peace treaties. With respect to war, it is significant that certain outlying Alaskan Islands were the only part of the American continent actually invaded and occupied by enemy forces during World War II. Yet, as I say, Alaskans had no voice whatever in the conduct of the war nor in the peace that followed.

Alaska is possessed of vast natural resources. There is wealth in the seas around her, in her mineral-bearing mountains and subsoil, and in her broad forests. Yet the people of Alaska, under territorial status, have very little control over the development of natural resources of Alaska.

In government, the one-quarter million American citizens of Alaska cannot elect their own governor, nor choose their own judges. Their daily lives are subject to the whims of distant bureaucrats and, yes, even the makers of laws for Alaska who sit in Washington and have little or no knowledge of conditions in Alaska.

STATEHOOD THE KEY TO FREEDOM AND DEVELOPMENT

All this would of course be changed by statehood. Only through statehood can the American citizens of Alaska fRee themselves from these and other shackles, political, and economic.

Some Members of this body would say, "All those reasons for statehood for Alaska would be equally true with respect to granting statehood to the people of Puerto Rico, or Guam, or the Virgin Islands."

I find it difficult to believe that any Senator who puts forth that argument has bothered to learn anything about the history of our Federal Union and our history precedents for statehood.

Those precedents are well established having been followed more than 30 times over a period of 167 years. The constitutional requirement is, of course, very simple. Article IV, section 3, of the Constitution provides:

New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union.

In every instance, except that of Texas and California, in which Congress has exercised this authority, the area involved had been an incorporated Territory. That is, the Constitution and the laws of the United States had been previously extended to it, and its people had undergone a period of tutelage-living under the Constitution and laws of the United States for some years.

The Supreme Court of the United States has described an incorporated Territory as "an inchoate state."

Mr. President, there are but two incorporated Territories or "inchoate states" remaining in the American political system. They are Alaska and Hawaii. That is all. Neither Puerto Rico, nor Guam, nor the Virgin Islands are incorporated Territories.

No areas other than Alaska and Hawaii are "inchoate states" under all of our political precedents and the decisions of our highest tribunal. Hence, no other areas have any historically honored claim for admission as states.

THREE REQUIREMENTS FOR STATEHOOD

In addition to those basic conditions precedent, analysis of the history of the admission of incorporated territories shows that there have been 3 requirements followed in each of the 35 instances. They are:

First. That the inhabitants of the proposed new state are imbued with and are sympathetic toward the principles of democracy exemplified in the American form of government and have proved their political maturity.

Second. That a majority of the electorate wish statehood.

Third. That the proposed new state has sufficient population and resources to support state government and at the same time carry its share of the cost of the Federal Government.

This has been the historic pattern under which new states have been admitted and by which our Nation has grown to greatness.

By each of these historic standards, Alaska is ready and qualified for statehood now.

No areas under the American flag—nor, of course, under any other flag—except Alaska and Hawaii do or can fulfill these requirements.

NO PRECEDENT FOR NON-INCORPORATED TERRITORIES

So I can state categorically here on the floor of the Senate, with all of the responsibility of a senior Senator and committee chairman: By approving the Alaska statehood bill we are not establishing a precedent for the admission of any other area. Statehood for Puerto Rico, or Guam, or the Virgin Islands is in no way involved, and can in no way be involved, in our action on Alaska statehood.

I respect any Senator's right to disagree with me on the issue of whether Alaska should be admitted as a State. But I find it difficult to recognize that the

objection made in good faith that, by admitting Alaska, we are opening the door to Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands, and other areas not under the American flag.

Such an argument is not in any way in accord with the facts.

Such an argument is not a valid argument.

STATEHOOD IN BEST INTEREST OF NATION

Mr. President, in bringing to a conclusion my remarks, I realize I have dwelt much on the past--on our great forward progress as a Nation. As a lawyer I have profound respect for precedent and tradition, but as a Member of the Senate I realize the Congress is not bound by precedent. I realize the question of admitting, in 1958, the richly endowed and strategically situated American Territory of Alaska to full equality in our Union of States is within the sound discretion of the 85th Congress.

However, I believe the past can be used as a useful guide for the present and future. Therefore, I feel justified in calling the attention of the Senate to the historic precedents, and in pointing out that refusal to pass the measure would be breaking the historic pattern under which our Nation has expanded and grown great.

After thorough hearings and careful study, I have found that our fellow-Americans in Alaska merit statehood, that they desire it and that they are ready, willing, and able to support it. I believe that statehood for Alaska would be in the best interests of the United States as a whole and of the people of Alaska. I therefore earnestly recommend that the Senate take prompt, affirmative action on this measure which is a major plank in the platforms of both political parties.

Senator Frank Church (D – Idaho)

Mr. President, I should like very much to join my colleagues in commending the able and eminent senior Senator from Montana, the chairman of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, for the leadership he has shown with respect to the pending proposed legislation. Not only in this session of Congress, but for many years in the past, the distinguished senior Senator from Montana has been recognized as the champion of statehood for Alaska.

The pending measure is not commonplace legislation. We have labored long and hard in this session, and we have passed much legislation which is of value and importance to the people of the United States. However, the measures we have passed, to a large extent, have been transient in nature. They have related to the meeting of exigencies of the present.

In the course of history, in the long span of events, that legislation will be little remembered and little remarked upon. Not so the pending bill. The Alaska statehood bill confronts us with a historic challenge; if we enact a bill which will admit Alaska to statehood within the next few days, our action will be remembered and remarked upon for as long as the American saga is a great chapter in the chronicles of Western civilization.

The bill, Mr. President, if passed by the Senate and approved by the President, will constitute the towering achievement of this session, just as the enactment of the civil rights law was the significant accomplishment of the last session.

On May 5, 1958, I spoke at length on the floor, urging statehood for Alaska. I was deeply gratified at the reaction which my address received. By mail, by telephone calls, and by telegrams, I was given assurance that the American people are wholeheartedly ready to welcome Alaska as a full partner in our Union of States.

For many parts of the Nation, too, came approving comment from the newspapers. I ask unanimous consent to have printed at this point in the Record a sampling of the editorials which reveal that the American press is fully aware of the significance of Alaskan statehood, and is ardent in the support of it, as are the American people themselves.

There being no objection, the editorials were ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

[*From the Caldwell (Idaho) Times of June 5, 1958*]

STATEHOOD FOR ALASKA

Statehood for Alaska has passed the United States House of Representatives and now faces action by the United States Senate. The Alaska statehood bill should pass.

Idaho's Senator Frank Church has been in the forefront of the battle for Alaska's admission as a sovereign and equal State of the Union. We trust that Senator Henry Dworshak will likewise support this move to increase the 48-star constellation into a new array of 49.

In the House our District's Representative Gracie Pfost voted for Alaska. The other Idaho Congressman added to his strange record by voting his usual "nay".

Alaskan statehood is a must. Alaska faces the Soviet Union across the narrow Bering Straits as the American continent's outpost and guardian. Likely to bear the brunt of a future war, the deserved recognition of statehood would strengthen the Nation's support for the Territory.

Alaska today is stronger as a potential State than any State, excepting Texas, when admitted to the Union. Alaska has untold riches and is the Nation's last frontier. Alaska today pays more in taxes than any State, including Texas, did when it became a State.

Alaska fits into the economy, the culture and the outlook of the Northwest. Admitted to the Union it would strengthen the West's position in the councils of the Nation.

Let Alaska into our family of States now.

[*From the Fairbanks (Alaska) News-Miner of May 6, 1958*]

FOR ALASKA – FOR THE NATION

A speech which we think is significant not only in the Alaska statehood struggle but in the history of the Nation was made on the floor of the United States Senate yesterday by Senator Frank Church, of Idaho, one of Alaska's greatest champions in the Congress.

"In 1776, we proclaimed an idea that has fired the hearts of men, ever since, who would be free," Church said. "In all the years that followed, we remained true to that idea, by extending the rights of statehood, full and equal participation within the Union, to the Territories which met, one by one, our historic tests.

"If, in the days of our infancy, we could ignite a flame of freedom so bright as to shine like a beacon around the world, then now, in the days of our greatness, we must do no less.

"We do less so long as we withhold the bounty of statehood from Alaska. We do less as we allow yet another day, yet another hour to pass, without action on the bill to admit Alaska to the Union. The world is watching. The hour is late."

Those are stirring words, worthy of the attention they received in the greatest deliberative body in the world, and worthy of the treatment they had in the press of the Nation.

There are many signs that a great popular ground swell of support for Alaska's statehood aspirations is rising all across the Nation. Senator Church referred to that, telling his fellow Members of Congress that "so preponderantly do the people we represent favor Alaskan statehood, that our continued failure to grant it can only be regarded as a deliberate flouting of the popular will."

The Senator noted that Alaska already has been a possession of the United States for 90 years and "has served the longest apprenticeship for statehood in our history."

He noted that Alaska has returned to the United States 425 times the $7.2 million paid for its purchase from imperial Russia in 1867. The United States, Senator Church declared, has been practicing "taxation without representation" in Alaska.

"Regularly, by our votes, we have levied taxes on the people of Alaska," he said. "Yet no Alaskan may vote here to determine what their taxes are to be, nor how their money should be spent."

"Surely the historic principle that lit the fires of the American Revolution requires no advocate on this floor, " Church said.

Senator Church spoke with rare cogency on a subject which appears to be concerning some people at the other end of the Capitol when he reviewed evidences that the majority of Alaskans have demonstrated again and again that they want statehood, and no new referendum is needed.

He noted that the 1946 referendum resulted in a 3-to-2 majority in favor of statehood. "A decade later, in 1956," he went on, "the people of Alaska again passed upon the issue of statehood by ratifying a proposed constitution for the new State, this time by a majority of more than 2-to-1. Only last year, the members of the Territorial Legislature, the elected representatives of the Alaskan people, passed unanimously a joint resolution calling for statehood by March 30, 1957."

Senator Church's scholarly address was accompanied by an appendix of six exhibits which he put in the Record. These documented with facts the points he made in his speech.

Alaska is fortunate in having such friends as Frank Church, Fred Seaton, Leo O'Brien, James Murray, Clair Engle, and others, who are willing to work and speak for the rights of distant Americans who are not even their constituents. Their fighting support of statehood for Alaska is in the best traditions of our history as a Nation.

…

Mr. President, I join with the distinguished Senator from Montana, the chairman of the committee on Interior and Insular Affairs [Mr. Murray], and with the junior Senator from Washington [Mr. Jackson], as a fellow member of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs and as a cosponsor of the proposed Alaska Statehood legislation, in the remarks which have been made and which I believe to be a fitting instruction to the historic debate which is about to commence in the Senate upon the question of the administration of the Territory of Alaska as the 49th State in the American Union.

Senator Warren G. Magnuson (D – Washington)

Mr. President, I shall not delay the Senate more than a minute. In the past 22 years in the House and in the Senate I have probably spoken about a half million words about statehood for Alaska. Likewise I have spoken many words on the subject outside the halls of Congress. I am so happy about the fine job that has been done I shall ask unanimous consent to have a statement I have prepared on the subject printed in the Record at this point. Then I will sit down. All I say is: "Let us vote for the 49th star in the flag."

There being no objection, the statement was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

STATEMENT BY SENATOR MAGNUSON

Alaska has sat impatiently in the anteroom of history for 42 years.

The Territory feels entitled to sit and deliberate with us—be one of us. Alaska wants to work out her own future just as each of the other 48 partners in our Nation has been allowed to do.

Alaska's hopes, aspirations, and quiet self-confidence are understandable.

She knows that her resources, her people, and the combined potential spell a brilliant future.

Alaska is just as aware of her strategic location as we are, or for that matter, as the Soviet Union is.

Recent installations of the defense early warning system signified this. And, of course, earlier proof came during World War II when our Alaskan bases—and Alaskan Highway—came into being. Those bases have grown since then.

But Alaska, and Alaskans, have difficulty understanding how they can be in the forefront of missile and jet-age defense and so woefully far behind in self-government.

Alaska has had its Territorial legislatures; it has faced the problems of raising revenue to run its government, such as it is.

Legislative committees have had a relatively free hand in studying Territorial problems, but have never had a free hand in solving many of the problems. After going so far, solutions have been sidetracked to Washington, D.C., and the Territory all too often has been forced to wait for final answers from either administrative agencies or Congress.

Actually, Federal agencies have been neither as expeditious in rendering decisions nor as interested in solving long-range problems with long-range solutions as an Alaskan State government would have been.

Still, Alaskans have paid their Federal income taxes.

Many Alaskans must feel today as New England and Virginia colonists felt when the cry "Taxation without representation is tyranny" was being heard in Revolutionary times.

If the cry were raised today in Alaska, it would not be without justification.

The 66,000 residents of Missouri or the 107,000 citizens of Kansas may have felt the same way until their moment for statehood came.

Perhaps the same could be said for the 62,000 residents of Arkansas, the 40,000 who lived in Nevada, the 84,000 in Idaho, and the 144,000 in Alabama at the time of statehood.

Actually, I discover that four of the Original Thirteen States had fewer that 180,000 citizens when they formed the Union.

Then the first nine States admitted to the Union, including Mississippi, were under 180,000.

In all, 27 of the 48 States have been admitted to the Union with a population under that of Alaska.

It is surprising, going through legislative history, how many times the argument of economics has cropped up in connection with statehood being granted a Territory.

It came up when Washington became a State. Congress was worried that the Territory would not be able to support itself as a State.

Actually this argument of economics is not confined to Territories or States. As we know, it appears in family discussions. The parents are always worried that the youngsters will not be able to support themselves.

As a Union of States, we express and advance this argument with each State added.

Of course there should be concern as to Alaska's ability to support itself and advance its own program. But this is more a concern of Alaskans than it is of Congress. Alaskans know this. They have been taxing themselves to develop their area toward statehood for many years.

Like the pioneers who brought each of the 48 States into the Union, Alaskans feel confident that they can lick this problem as they have met and solved others. I say, we should give them that opportunity.

Show me a State which does not have problems of raising money to finance schools, and support other needed governmental functions and State projects.

None are to be found.

Alaska is no different.

These are problems of growth and Alaska is growing, just as the United States is growing.

Alaskans are fully capable of solving these problems as are other Americans through their State and National Governments.

We have two choices:

These United States, like fearful parents, can waver further in indecision, and allow our lack of confidence to undermine Alaskans and say: "You will be ready for statehood someday—but not now."

Or, we can be proud of Alaskans' determination to strike out for their true independence through their own real self-government and say: "We approve and commend your vision, understand and believe your hopes, know that your mission and goal can and will be reached; so good luck and godspeed."

I heartily recommend the second course of action.

Alaska should be a State—

Because that is the best way to strengthen and to realize the potentialities of a growing region that constitutes the closest approximation of a frontier with the Soviet Union anywhere under American laws.

Because it is alien to the spirit of our institutions to keep a large group of Americans—well over 200,000 now, and their number rapidly increasing—in the second-class citizenship of Territorial status.

Because the world at large looks to the United States to set an example of extending full participation in government to all those peoples under its flag who want and who fulfill the requirements for statehood.

Alaska's distance from the present group of 48 States and the fact that it is not contiguous with them has very little pertinence in these days of rapid communications. It is much easier for an Alaskan to reach Washington by air than

for an Ohioan a century ago. And there is no comparison between Alaska's proximity to the heart of the Nation and that of California, when it was admitted in 1850, at a time when no railroad, no telegraph, not even a regular stagecoach service, spanned the continent.

Senator Strom Thurmond (D – South Carolina)

Mr. President, the issue of Alaskan statehood is a complex one. It is a highly important one. It involves questions of national defense, conservation of resources, rights and duties of States, and the setting of a precedent for admission of additional non-contiguous territories to statehood in the Union.

I hope that we all will bear in mind, in considering this momentous question, the element of finality involved. Statehood once granted is irrevocable. The time to consider all aspects of the question is now, for once the statehood bill becomes law, it will be too late for this body to reconsider its action and to correct the situation by repealing its previously enacted bill, as it can do in most other cases. In view of this finality which stares us in the face, I feel that we should all take a long and careful look before setting forth down this road of no return.

We have already heard and read a great deal of background information on the subject of Alaska. We have heard eloquent and glowing descriptions of the physical grandeur of the land. We have heard much of the character of the inhabitants, both the native Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts and the newcomers who now make up a great majority of the population. We have heard detailed reports of the economic situation in Alaska. We have been given an abundance of statistics and figures of every sort. In short, we have been provided more than generously with background information, piled high, pressed down, still running over.

However, according to the Senate's sentiment as indicated in the press, this information has not been properly digested by the members of this august body. I shall, therefore, review some of these facts and figures during the course of my address.

Mr. President, I reaffirm my opposition to the admission of Alaska to statehood. I shall state the reasons for my position. I shall urge my fellow senators to join with me in opposing the pending bill, so fraught with danger to the future well-being of the United States of America.

…

Mr. President, in conclusion I should like to briefly summarize six of the principal reasons why I am so firmly opposed to the admission of Alaska to statehood. These reasons are:

First. Alaska is a territory with a poorly developed and very unsound economy, a territory in which the principal activities are those conducted by the Federal Government. I have grave doubt that Alaska is economically capable of assuming the responsibilities that go with statehood.

Second. The Alaskan statehood bill raises grave legal questions which have not been answered. For example, the section authorizing the President to withdraw northern and western Alaska from state control and to transfer the governmental functions to the federal government would weaken the sovereignty of Alaska and make it inferior to the other States. I cannot see how this could be construed as being constitutional. If it were so construed it could set a precedent for the invasion of the sovereignty of other states by the Federal Government.

Third. The provision of the bill granting public land to the State of Alaska is the greatest giveaway ever incorporated in a statehood bill. The gift is not in the interest of the people who live in the Territory of Alaska, nor in the interest of the people of the United States.

Fourth. The new state of Alaska would require extraordinary Federal aid. Those persons who favor the extension of Federal power at the expense of the states would seize upon this as an excuse to extend further Federal aid to all the States, and the State sovereignty would be further diminished.

Fifth. The admission of Alaska, a noncontiguous area, would set a precedent for the admission of other noncontiguous areas, whose customs, traditions, and basic philosophies have non-American roots.

Sixth. There is no necessity to grant statehood to Alaska, for it is possible--through the commonwealth plan--to provide Alaska with a form of government which will give its citizens as great a degree of home rule as they desire.

Mr. President, I hope we will all bear in mind the fact that statehood, once granted, is irrevocable. I urge my fellow senators to join with me in opposing the dangerous bill.

Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson (D – Washington)

Mr. President, the time is past due for the admission of Alaska to the Union. The issue has been defined in each of the last seven Congresses, and now has come before the Senate in this 85th Congress. All possible arguments in support of and in opposition to Alaska statehood have been raised and discussed. Both parties have time and again pledged support to statehood. The issue is not new, it is not partisan. There is no need for an exhaustive review of the facts and arguments, nor for partisan attacks on one another.

From the beginning, the emphasis of the Territories Subcommittee of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs has been on getting at the basic provisions that would achieve statehood. As a result of this approach, the subcommittee recommended unanimously a statehood bill, and the full committee voted with but one dissent to report a statehood bill. Members on both sides of the aisle worked hard on this issue, and it is only proper that the presentation of the bill be a bipartisan effort. Certainly one of the hardest-working members of the Territories Subcommittee, and its ranking minority member, was the distinguished junior Senator from California. I am grateful to him and all the members of my committee for their generous support.

…

The first bill for Alaska statehood was introduced 42 years ago, and additional bills have been introduced in every Congress since 1943. Eleven hearings have been held--2 of them in Alaska, the others here in Washington. More than 4000 pages of testimony have been published.

…

THE LAST SPEECH BEFORE THE FLOOR VOTE

Mr. President, the Senate is about to cast a historic vote which will grant statehood to Alaska. Only historians will be able to truly evaluate this act. I do not believe there is a member of this Senate who can assess the great good that has been done today or all the benefits that will accrue to the people of Alaska and to all Americans by our action. People throughout the world will herald statehood for Alaska as dramatic proof of the dynamic characteristics of democracy in America.

I should like to personally express my deep appreciation to the acting majority leader, the Senator from Montana [Mr. Mansfield] and to the minority leader, the senator from California [Mr. Knowland], as well as to the ranking minority member of the subcommittee who handled this matter on the Republican side of the aisle, the distinguished senator from California [Mr. Kuchel]; likewise, to the chairman of the full committee, the distinguished senator from Montana, [Mr.

Murray]; to the members of the subcommittee and to the members of the full committee, who have been so helpful.

I wish to mention particularly the distinguished junior senator from Idaho [Mr. Church], who has been so helpful throughout the debate, and other members of the subcommittee, as well.

I think when we consider the historic situation today, it is well to call attention to the fact that one of the ardent supporters of statehood has been the distinguished senior senator from Arizona. He remembers the long, hard fight for statehood for his great state. Is has been 46 years since the last state was admitted--Arizona. I think we can be proud tonight to have in the chamber the man who has served that state continuously in the House of Representatives and I the Senate since the last act of statehood passed by congress. I refer, of course, to the distinguished senior senator from Arizona, the president pro tempore, Carl Hayden. We are all proud of the able assistance which he has given us.

It would be impossible to enumerate all the persons who have been ably assisted in the passage of this legislation. But I think it would be a mistake, indeed, if I did not call attention to some of the persons who, year in and year out, have fought hard for statehood for Alaska.

I refer, first of all, to Delegate Bartlett; to former Gov. Ernest Gruening; to Senator Egan who is Senator-elect under the Tennessee plan, together with Senator-elect Gruening; and to Representative-elect Rivers.

I express my deep appreciation also to the Secretary of the Interior, Hon. Fred Scaton, and to his staff, who so ably assisted us in all matters connected with statehood; and to the Governor of Alaska, Hon. Michael A. Stepovich, who has given his full support to statehood.

In any fair appraisal of the Alaska statehood bill, one fact stands out very clear. Our work to date has been the product of a single party. It has not been the product of a single party. It has been the product of a bipartisan majority. This demonstrates again that Americans can close ranks on the truly great issues.

This is not a Republican victory; it is a not a Democratic victory; it is not simply a victory for Alaskans. Mr. President, it is a victory for all Americans and for the democratic process.

Several Senators: “Vote! Vote!“

The presiding officer (Mr. Neuberger in the chair): The question is on a the passage of the bill. The yeas and nays have been ordered, and the clerk will call the roll.

THE RESULT OF THE VOTE ON ALASKA STATEHOOD ACT
YEAS 64, NAYS 20, AS FOLLOWS:

Yeas 64: Alken, Allott, Anderson, Barrett, Bennett, Bible, Briker, Capehart, Carlson, Carroll, Case, N.J., Case, S. Dark., Chavez, Church, Clark, Cotton, Dirksen, Douglas, Dworshak, Frear, Goldwater, Green, Hayden, Hennings, Hickenlooper, Hill, Holland, Hruska, Humphrey, Jackson, Javits, Jordan, Kefauver, Kennedy, Kerr, Knowland, Kuchel, Langer, Lausche, Long, Magnuson, Mansfield, Martin, Iowa, McNamara, Morse, Morton, Mundt, Murray, Neuberger, Pastore, Payne, Potter, Proxmire, Purtell, Revercomb, Smith, Maine, Smith, N.J., Sparkman, Symington, Thye, Watkins, Wiley, Williams, Young

Nays 20: Bridges, Bush, Butler, Byrd, Cooper, Eastland, Ellender, Ervin, Fulbright, Johnston S.C., Martin Pa., McClellan, Monroney, Robertson, Russell, Saitonstall, Schoeppel, Stennis, Talmadge, Thurmond

Not Voting 12: Beall, Curtis, Flanders, Gore, Hoblitzell, Ives, Jenner, Johnson Tex., Malone, O'Mahoney, Smathers, Yarborough

So the bill (H.R. 7999) was passed. [Manifestations of applause in the galleries]

Senator Frank Church's (D – ID) Tribute to Ernest Guening and E.L. Bartlett, which took place after passage of the Alaska Statehood Act:

Mr. President, the Senate's passage of the Alaskan statehood bill marks the climax of a long struggle to give the people of Alaska all their rights as United States citizens, including the more precious--the right to self-government. Of many who have devoted themselves a cause of Alaskan statehood, I should like to speak particularly of two Alaskans whose labors have been signally instrumental in achieving statehood for Alaska. I speak of Ernest Gruening and E.L. Bartlett.

Governor Gruening began his fight for the Alaskan people after he had encompassed and excelled in a number of careers. Educated as a physician, he became a successful newspaperman and author, serving as managing editor of the Boston Traveler, the Boston Journal, and New York Herald, and the Nation; as general manager of La Prensa; as founder of the Portland (Maine) Evening News; as author of Mexico and Its Heritage and The Public Pays. In 1934 he was appointed by Franklin D. Roosevelt as Director of the Division of Territories and Island Possessions, and in 1939 as Governor of Alaska.

During his 14-year gubernatorial term, Governor Gruening worked for Alaskan statehood. He also worked for and achieved many internal improvements for Alaska. In 1945 he was instrumental in the Alaskan Legislature's passage of a civil rights bill insuring equal treatment for all Alaskans. The governor also succeeded in the difficult task of passing a tax bill through the Legislature, this making possible many projects for the public welfare.

In Alaska, Governor Gruening induced the Legislature to authorize a statehood referendum. In this referendum, the Alaskan people, by a 3 to 2 vote, disproved the charges that Alaskans did not want statehood. Not only has Ernest Gruening marshaled the forces for statehood in Alaska, but he also, for many years, has campaigned on this issue vigorously in the United States. He has testified at many congressional hearings and addressed numerous civic organizations all over the country. As a result many important national organizations endorsed statehood for Alaska.

In 1956, Governor Gruening was elected Senator from Alaska, under the Tennessee plan, and has since worked vigorously both in the Halls of Congress, and out, for statehood. This victory for Alaska and America today is, in large measure, the result of nearly two decades of struggle and service by that noted American--Gov. Ernest Gruening.

Governor Gruening is an Alaskan by choice and devotion; the native voice of Alaska is heard through Delegate E. L. (Bob) Bartlett, son of Klondike pioneers, and resident of Alaska since his first year. Delegate Bartlett has served Alaska as associate editor of the Fairbanks News-Miner, as Assistant Alaskan Director for the

Federal Housing Administration, as Secretary to Delegate Anthony J. Dimond, as secretary of Alaska, and as Delegate to Congress for the last 13 years.

In Congress, Delegate Bartlett was instrumental in obtaining the Public Works Act of 1949, and the Alaskan Housing Authority, much needed by the Alaskan people. In the 80th Congress, Delegate Bartlett, although he did not have regular congressional status, was the most successful legislator, having 13 of his own bills passed. In 1950 and again, last month, Delegate Bartlett was extremely influential in House passage of the Alaskan statehood bill.

Both of these men have given much of their lives to what at times must have seemed an impossible goal. Now their goal has been realized; the people of Alaska can now govern themselves and have their say in our national government. The admission of Alaska as the 49th star in our American constellation is a living monument to the selfless and devoted public service of these two men.

The first officials of a new state, its governors and congressmen, its administrators and legislators, always make a profound and lasting imprint on the character of a state's government. It is to be hoped that Alaska will choose men with as distinguished and dedicated a record as that achieved by these two Alaskans. I am sure they will; the Alaskan people in their struggle for statehood have gained a rare appreciation and understanding of the obligations of a democratic citizenry.

Seldom can political effort boast of a triumph as pronounced as that achieved yesterday in the cause of Alaskan statehood. Governor Gruening and Delegate Bartlett will live in the history of Alaska and all of America as two men most responsible for adding the "Great Land" as a sister among sovereign states. Governor Gruening and Delegate Bartlett have served America's destiny in being the Star of the North into our Union, and I know that both will continue to render great service to Alaska and the United States in the future years. The devotion and loyalty they have displayed in past decades permit no other course.

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S PROCLAMATION

ADMITTING ALASKA TO THE UNION AND THE EXECUTIVE
ORDER CHANGING THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES.
JANUARY 3, 1959

GENTLEMEN, I think that all of us recognize this as an historic occasion. Certainly for myself I feel very highly privileged and honored to welcome the forty-ninth State into the Union.

Such a ceremony has not taken place in almost half a century, so at least I have the feeling of self-gratification that I am not just one of a group in this kind of ceremony.

To the State itself, to its people, I extend on behalf of all their sister States, best wishes and hope for prosperity and success. And to each of you gentlemen elected to high office to represent your new State, in both State and Federal offices, my congratulations, my felicitations, and my hope that we will all work together to the benefit of all forty-nine States.

Certainly, I pledge to you my cooperation in that effort. And now, as far as these pens are concerned, I hope there's one for each of you people who has worked so hard to bring this about.

NOTE: The ceremony was held in the Cabinet Room at noon. Among those present were Senators-elect E. L. Bartlett and Ernest Gruening, Representative-elect Ralph J. Rivers, Acting Governor Waino Hendrickson, Michael A. Stepovich, former Governor of Alaska, and Robert Atwood, Publisher of the Anchorage Daily Times.

The new 49-star flag, to become official on July 4, was unfurled immediately after the President signed the documents. Proclamation 3269 "Admission of the State of Alaska into the Union" and Executive Order 10798 "Flag of the United States" are published in the Federal Register

ADDITIONAL SPEECHES

Meeting the Challenge
Remarks by E. L. Bartlett
Alaska Constitutional Convention, University of Alaska, November 8, 1955

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There are those in Alaska and in the United States who have argued that Alaska is not yet ready for statehood because its people lack "political maturity". I have not yet settled in my own mind that it is capable of precise definition. But I do know that one aspect of maturity is the ability to manage one's resources. This Convention can demonstrate to the Congress and the people of the United States at least this aspect of political maturity by giving notice that Alaska's resources will be administered, within the bounds of human limitations and shortcomings, for the benefit of all of the people.

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Find the full speech at the website below:
http://www.alaska.edu/creatingalaska/convention/speeches/bartlett.xml

Let us now end American colonialism
Remarks by Ernest Gruening
Delivered to the Delegates of the Alaska Constitutional Convention
November 9, 1955

We meet to validate the most basic of American principles, the principle of "government by consent of the governed." We take this historic step because the people of Alaska who elected you, have come to see that their long standing and unceasing protests against the restrictions, discriminations and exclusions to which we are subject have been unheeded by the colonialism that has ruled Alaska for 88 years. The people of Alaska have never ceased to object to these impositions even though they may not have realized that such were part and parcel of their colonial status. Indeed the full realization that Alaska is a colony may not yet have come to many Alaskans, nor may it be even faintly appreciated by those in power who perpetuate our colonial servitude.

Half a century ago, a governor of Alaska, John Green-Brady, contemplating the vain efforts of Alaskans for nearly forty years to secure even a modicum of workable self-government, declared:

“We are graduates of the school of patience."

…

Find the full speech at the website below:
http://www.alaska.edu/creatingalaska/convention/speeches/gruening.xml