

## On Governor Murkowski's State of the State Speech

By: Rep. Vic Kohring  
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As I listened to Governor Frank Murkowski's State of the State speech last week, I became more and more pleased. This was a very good speech coming from a man whose philosophy seems genuinely centerline Republican and therefore freedom oriented. This was not "Santa Claus" Tony Knowles giving away other people's toys for eight years. This was not a *minority* candidate. "Santa" Knowles received only 41% of the popular vote when he was first elected, Governor Murkowski a full 55%. We now have a indisputable coach, elected by a *real* majority.

Let's consider which statements lend toward Governor Murkowski's freedom orientation. His fifth sentence layed the foundation, "They asked for a government that could learn to live within its means..." This is precisely what I've been preaching for the last eight years. Hurrah!

The Governor ended his opening remarks with "Accountability and a smaller, smarter state government." Again a Republican idea whose time has reappeared and which we must fight to achieve. It's a mighty relief to know that Alaska's Chief Executive believes this. I don't agree with *all* of the Governor's statements, although his core ideas are unpretentious and true.

The Governor's speech gets better. He went on to say, "Wherever I go, Alaskans tell me they expect state government to tighten its belt and focus on our basic

priorities...education, transportation and public safety.” I’ve heard this too. The only place we **don’t** hear it is from Democrats and the liberal Anchorage Daily News. My e-mail, letters, phone calls and faxes usually run close to 90%, asking me to make these same priorities. And now we finally have a governor who understands and believes this too. Again Hurrah!

How does Governor Murkowski propose to “tighten the state’s belt?” By cutting spending and increasing income through enhancing the private sector’s ability to produce more. In other words, after eight years of niggling and whining about needing new programs (meaning new and higher taxes to create government feel-good giveaways) we finally have a man who understands that the correct way to fight poverty and create a stronger middle class is to allow people who produce wealth, such as businessmen, space to do so.

That means removing unnecessary taxes and restrictions from productive people, thus creating a much bigger economic pie. This notion is what free enterprise, individualism and America are all about. Our new governor understands this well. I’m excited about the potentially bright future we have with his philosophy.

As Chairman of the Legislature’s Oil and Gas Committee, I am especially pleased about Governor Murkowski’s intentions regarding the oil industry. More so than his predecessor, he wants to encourage oil companies to increase production by “improving access, expanding the drilling window and reducing permitting time” and by “statutory and regulatory changes and state investment in infrastructure.” In other words we now have a governor

who is willing to remove government placed obstacles from their success. Everybody wins. Everyone gets more.

Add to this, we have a governor who will “fight like the dickens” to build a natural gas pipeline. Now we’re talking new jobs, production and economic growth all mixing within a system of limited government. Governor Murkowski recognizes that it is not government that makes a society great, free or wealthy. It is **people** who do so. And **free** people do it best, thus America the greatest country on earth, and Alaska, the greatest state among the fifty.

Go Coach Murkowski! Go Alaska! Beat poverty, liberal ideas and government dominance. We are now free at last. Free to choose. Free to produce.

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