

**HOUSE AND SENATE  
JOINT JOURNAL SUPPLEMENT**

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**February 18, 2026**

**Wednesday**

**No. 14**

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**Address by**

**The Honorable Dan Sullivan**

**United States Senator**

**Before a Joint Session**

**of the**

**Second Session of the**

**Thirty-Fourth Alaska State Legislature**

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**February 18, 2026**

**Juneau, Alaska**



**The following was submitted for publication:**

Good morning, everybody. I am so honored to be back in front of the Alaska Legislature. Mr. President, thank you, sir. Speaker Edgmon. Members of the House and the Senate, thank you for allowing me to come here each year to speak with you. It is truly an honor.

I want to begin by thanking all my staff who are here. I have a great, hard-working team and I couldn't do it without them. Of course, as I do every year, I want to thank the most important person here for me - the love of my life - my wife, Julie. As you guys all know, being in the arena of public service can be tough on families. My wife epitomizes the grace, dignity, beauty, and strength that Alaskans admire and respect. There is no way I could do this job for our great state without my amazing wife.

I really want to thank you guys. Every year, you give my wife a standing ovation. I don't know what you think about me, but you give her a standing ovation. That is very special, and I appreciate it. You can tell it's heartfelt.

I also want to give a shout-out to one of the senators who just escorted me, Lyman Hoffman, who is marking 40 years of service - the longest-serving senator in our state's history. He has been a great friend and mentor, and, let's admit it - I'm sure you know this - I would say a little bit of a drill sergeant. When Lyman Hoffman says, "Get it done," I just say, "Roger that, sir," and try to get it done for Lyman. I want to do a round of applause for him as well. My speech is off to a good start. That's two standing ovations in 60 seconds.

And, finally, I want to congratulate the President of the Senate, President Gary Stevens, as the longest-serving Senate President in Alaska history! Mr. President, we appreciate your steady leadership throughout your entire career.

We also have some old friends in the chamber. One of your old friends, Josiah Patkotak, who's a good friend of mine. He served this chamber super well and now he's doing a great job as the Mayor of the North Slope Borough. Thank you, Josiah, for coming here today.

I also want to thank all of you for your service to our state, for the meetings we've had over the last two days. I thought they were very constructive. Thank you for your time. Thank you for all you've done.

There is nothing more important than building a vibrant future for Alaska, for our kids and our grandkids.

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You know, the critical way to do this is through partnerships. Progress comes when Alaskans work together, across regions, across ideology, to solve hard problems. We've done it before. We'll do it again.

Which brings me to the theme of my remarks this morning, and that is the Alaska comeback.

From fighting for statehood, to rebuilding after the 1964 earthquake, to the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, Alaskans, time and again, have demonstrated that we can overcome challenges and achieve our dreams when our leaders are aligned on policy, opportunity and private sector investment toward a common goal.

I believe we are at the beginning of another historic Alaska Comeback.

So the question naturally comes: What are we coming back from?

We're coming back from this chart. I presented this last year. This is the 70 executive orders from the Biden administration - don't worry, I'm not going to rip it up this time - all directly targeting Alaska, our economy, good-paying jobs, and our future. This has always been a goal of the far-left special interests in D.C., and they made significant progress - take a look - in achieving that goal under the Biden administration.

As you all know, the federal government, particularly in our state, has immense power. When it is concentrated to shut down an opportunity or opportunities in a single state, the consequences can be devastating. And they were.

But, as I mentioned, we're now beginning to see the beginnings of a real comeback, and real progress on goals we've dreamed about collectively for decades: an energy renaissance on the North Slope; a gas line that can finally reduce energy costs in our state and offer endless possibilities for the future; a rebuilt military and robust Coast Guard presence during a dangerous time; and a health care system that reflects the realities of delivering care in the most rural, high-cost health care state in America.

As we pursue these goals, we must keep as our North Star Alaska's working families who continue to feel the strain of higher costs and uncertainties, families, by the way, who stand to benefit the most if we get this right collectively. But I have no doubt, the Alaska Comeback is underway with important drivers powering it.

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First is a change in the direction of the executive branch. On day one - and I presented this last year, but it bears repeating - in the Trump administration, the President signed this executive order, "Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential." It's really important. And, as I've said to many elected officials across the state, whether you supported this administration and voted for them or didn't, it doesn't matter. We should use this. This is the federal government telling the world, telling Alaskans, and importantly, telling federal agencies that the Last Frontier Lock Up of Biden is over, and we are going to unleash Alaska's economy, opportunity and future, and that is really important.

By the way, I think we have handouts on your desk. I like handouts, as you can tell. They help tell the story.

We are the only state that has its own executive order. Again, I think it's really important.

Second, a really important driver of our comeback is that we passed the Working Families Tax Cuts Act.

I often refer to this legislation as the "Alaska Opportunity Act," because so much in it tailored specifically for Alaska's needs. My team and I fought hard to make this bill happen. And let me tell you, no state in the union did better than Alaska in this historic legislation. That is something that actually Democrats and Republicans back in D.C. actually agree on - that we did the best in this bill.

Since this bill passed in July, my team and I have been out all across Alaska doing town halls, doing meetings - we've done well over 60 - meeting with families, and workers, and business owners, Alaska Native leaders, health care providers, and local officials. I've been listening to their concerns, but also [tried to] explain what's in the bill, and then, very importantly, talking about the historic opportunities we have to work together on this legislation on its implementation.

That is really what I want to do with all of you all this morning.

Let me start with Alaska's resource development economy, because nothing else we do succeeds without that. For too long - and I just gave you examples - Alaska has lived under a pendulum: One administration encouraging development of our economy and resources, then another administration coming in and saying, "No," through executive orders, "we're going to shut it down."

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That kind of instability discourages investment. Energy companies, large and small, do not operate on election cycles. In Alaska, as you all know, returns are realized over decades. Long-term capital requires long-term certainty.

That is exactly what the Working Families Tax Cuts Act does for Alaska.

When the president talks about this bill unleashing American energy, it's really about unleashing Alaska energy. We stopped the pendulum and put certainty into the law as it relates to Alaska. Mandatory lease sales covering millions of acres for our state over the next 10 years in NPR-A, in ANWR, and in Cook Inlet.

In 2017, this body, with the Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker, presented to me a resolution that said, "Senator, it's time to get ANWR open."

It was a unanimous resolution from the Alaska Legislature. And in the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, we did that. We got it open, in the law. But in a pattern we've seen before, that progress was illegally shut down by the Biden administration. A federal court in Alaska confirmed as much.

So, in this bill, we did it again, in statute. Now, this is a great opportunity for all of us. Because Alaska is now in the law on what has to happen for our state. When I was DNR commissioner, my team and I put together an ambitious, comprehensive plan to get our state back to a million barrels a day.

Of course, the skeptics came out in force. Alaska's days as an energy powerhouse were over, they said. "We have to manage the TAPS decline." Always heading south, never heading north. Well, the skeptics were wrong.

Between Pikka and Willow and the long-term certainty in this bill, the high end of the oil forecast by DNR for 2034 is 957,000 barrels a day. Now, it's not a million, but it's pretty darn close.

This will give us more good-paying jobs, and importantly, for all of you, more state revenues to make your job here in Juneau less challenging with an increasing budget.

Another area, speaking of an increasing budget, where this law dramatically helps Alaska, is by mandating a revenue split from federal lands in Alaska of 70-30: 70 percent for the state, 30 percent for the feds by 2034. That's a big deal.

This law also dramatically incentivizes the development of our nation's timber resources and critical minerals, all very important for our state.

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By the way, the 70-30 split is a generational achievement, something we've been trying to get done for decades. I want to thank Senator Wielechowski - I don't know if he's here - on being an advocate on this. He's been pressing this. He pressed me last year a lot on these issues, so I want to thank Senator Wielechowski for highlighting this.

Now, to the ultimate dream for our state, the gas line and the AK LNG project. My team and I are working on advancing this project daily.

I've traveled four times to Japan and Korea in the last few years, promoting Alaskan gas. I've hosted dozens of meetings with energy companies, financiers, of course, our own federal government officials, Asian LNG importers, Asian government leaders. Just in the past few weeks, I've had discussions with the President, his chief of staff, several members of his cabinet. They are aggressively continuing to make AK LNG a project that is a top priority of theirs.

If you look again at that executive order from Day One, AK LNG is highlighted as a top priority for the Trump administration.

The Working Families Tax Cuts Act also created a Department of Energy financing facility designed to support major energy infrastructure projects for America. We are relentlessly trying to unleash such Department of Energy financing for this project.

Last year, I spoke about how we have continued, my team and I, ramming against the AK LNG line. Sometimes it seems like a fool's errand. Other times not. I said then, "A crack has developed, an 800-mile crack in this wall, that shows undeniable progress." That crack is now taking the shape of a doorway. Maybe that door never opens for our state, but the undeniable progress continues.

Now, I know there's a small but loud cohort of people in Alaska who consistently say, "This project is impossible. It can never happen."

I certainly hope these naysayers are not right. This may be our last, best chance to achieve our Alaska LNG dream. Here's my ask of all of you: Join me in doing everything in your power to make this dream a reality. Think creatively, be bold.

I'll give you an example of something we've been pressing on, and we just made really important progress yesterday on: new federal data centers on Air Force bases in Alaska for AI computing.

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This will help our military. It will help increase domestic demand for our gas and lower the costs of building and financing the pipeline. And, just yesterday, the Air Force, at my strong urging, put out a request for information on doing this in Alaska for data centers.

This is a big idea. We have a handout on this one, too. I've been pitching this to everybody in the country who will listen. But yesterday, the Air Force said we're going to start that process in Alaska. I think that's a very important step.

You all know this, but imagine the possibilities. What we could achieve with a nearly inexhaustible supply of our own affordable, clean energy for the whole state. Imagine the private sector opportunities that could start here - manufacturing, thousands of good-paying jobs, data centers, a steady source of income for many years to fill our state's coffers.

It is too big, too transformative, in terms of the possibilities for our great state, not to try at this moment with everything we all have collectively.

And, with the Working Families Tax Cuts Act, we now have a tax system that can help spur the renaissance of businesses and good-paying jobs that can come with the North Slope oil boom, that can come with the gas line.

Alaskans know that buying equipment is one of the biggest costs when starting or expanding a business. This bill that we passed in July allows businesses to write off these costs in the first year. For our small business owners here, you know how important that is including for equipment and research and development. This helps our small businesses keep more cash, invest more, and very importantly, create more jobs for Alaskans.

For businesses and families, this bill prevented the largest tax increase in American history. It would have been \$4 trillion, over \$4 trillion, had we not acted last year and replaced that with permanent tax relief.

For Alaska families, this means an estimated annual tax savings anywhere from \$7,500 to almost \$11,000 for a family of four. And, for Alaskans on Social Security, this bill creates a \$12,000 deduction per couple, providing real relief for our seniors who are living on fixed incomes.

We also eliminated taxes on tips and overtime, making it easier for Alaskans, working Alaskans, to keep more of what they've earned. That's a good one.

And another area where this bill delivers is child care. I want to thank Alyse Galvin, who has brought this issue to my attention, like so many other Alaskans, for years.

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This bill modernizes long outdated policies by strengthening the child tax credit, expanding dependent care assistance, and dramatically, historically, increasing tax credits for businesses to invest in their own child care facilities, and pool resources, with other businesses to do so. Thank you, Alyse. We made big progress on this bill.

So another comeback, critical to our whole nation and our great state, is the Alaska military comeback. Now, we know our history better than any other state. During some of our nation's most existential crises, like World War II and the Cold War, Alaska played an immensely important role in defending America.

The “Father of the U.S. Air Force,” General Billy Mitchell, called our state the most strategic place in the world. And, for a time, our military posture reflected that truth. But when we won the Cold War, something dangerous began to happen. The Pentagon's understanding of Alaska's importance faded.

Bases closed. Armories shuttered across western Alaska. Alaska drifted from strategic cornerstone to strategic backwater in the eyes of many in the Pentagon.

I saw this national security amnesia about our great state firsthand when I arrived in the Senate in 2015. The Obama administration had put out its Arctic strategy. I was at a hearing with the brand new Secretary of Defense, and I held it up. I said: “Mr. Secretary, here's your Arctic strategy. It's 14 pages long, half of which are pictures. You talk about climate change the whole time. And you mentioned Russia as a threat once in a footnote.” I called it what it is. Slammed it on the dais. I said, “This is a joke. This is a joke.” The Pentagon has to do better.

The Obama administration then announced a cut of an additional 40,000 active duty Army troops in America, including the 5,000-strong JBER-based 4/25, the only airborne brigade combat team in the entire Asia Pacific. Just a few years later, the Coast Guard then announced it had plans to reduce its presence in Alaska.

Now, our military leaders over the years had forgotten how important Alaska was from a national security perspective for our country. But guess who didn't? You didn't. We didn't. Alaskans didn't. All of us, with our collective memory and knowledge - communities, veterans, legislators, families - we came together and made it clear that retreat was not an option. Cutting back on Alaska's military was something we would fight. And we fought.

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I also quickly learned as a new U.S. Senator the value of certain Senate prerogatives, especially putting holds on senior military and civilian confirmations until I got from them concrete commitments to build up forces in Alaska, not to draw them down. Slowly but surely, with everybody's help and our great state - and it was a collective effort - Alaska's military comeback began, and now it is in full force.

We are now undergoing the largest military build-up and expansion - billions of dollars in investment - since World War II.

The 4/25 at JBER, it didn't get shuttered. It expanded into the U.S. Army's 11th Airborne Division, now fully centered in Alaska.

Eielson didn't close. It's now home to two squadrons of F-35s, and when combined with the two squadrons of F-22s at JBER, it gives Alaska over 100 fifth generation fighters. No place on the planet Earth has that kind of fifth-gen fighter combat power. More KC-135 tankers are enroute to Alaska.

I just had a stern conversation with the Secretary of the Air Force about this a couple of days ago. Our role as the cornerstone of missile defense - protecting the whole country - is expanding significantly, particularly in the Interior, with the billion-dollar Long Range Discrimination Radar finalized at Clear, and the Golden Dome initiative, which in the Working Families Tax Cuts Act has about \$25 billion for investment.

The Ted Stevens Center for the Arctic, with over 60 dedicated veterans at JBER, has rapidly become one of the world's premier national security think tanks.

The infrastructure we need in Alaska to project American power is expanding, with a half-billion-dollar investment in a brand new runway at JBER, \$400 million to build the deep-water strategic port in Nome, and my favorite, also in the Working Families Tax Cuts Act: \$115 million to start reopening the Navy base at Adak, one of the most strategic places in the world.

Now, even my beloved Marine Corps recently came to me at a senior level, saying, "Senator, we have plans to expand in Alaska." I'm like, "Hey, Marines, you're usually the first to fight." Like, get on with it, man. Let's go.

But it is the Coast Guard comeback in Alaska that is truly historic. The Coast Guard didn't downsize it.

They were planning that in Alaska, and I made sure of that by putting a hold on the confirmation of the Commandant of the Coast Guard until he provided

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me with a plan to expand the Coast Guard's presence in Alaska, which we are now doing in so many communities, with hundreds of millions of dollars of investments in Kodiak, Ketchikan, Seward, Sitka, Valdez, Petersburg.

Everybody loves the Coast Guard. It's very true. Everybody loves the Coast Guard. I read that list, but I didn't get to probably one of the most - and certainly one of the most important on the expansion - right here in Juneau, the Coast Guard expansion. Again, if you look at the Working Families Tax Cuts Act handout, on the back page, it talks about the largest investment in Coast Guard history in American history from this bill. It's a \$25 billion investment to fully rebuild our Coast Guard.

As the chairman of the Coast Guard subcommittee, I was very honored to write a lot of this. But take a look at the numbers: 16 new icebreakers, 22 new cutters, 40 new helicopters, almost \$4.5 billion in shoreside infrastructure, \$300 million for Juneau, Alaska to homeport the icebreaker Storis right here, which is going to happen.

But we are not done. I recently chaired a Coast Guard subcommittee hearing with the Commandant of the Coast Guard. When I asked them about the potential for more icebreakers being homeported in Alaska - imagine that, homeporting an icebreaker in the state with the ice - he responded by saying the Coast Guard is considering homeporting up to four more icebreakers in our great state. Even I was shocked by that.

This Coast Guard comeback is spurring some of the most exciting economic activity we've seen in years. It's not getting covered by the press, but it is really exciting: a boom in shipbuilding and heavy maintenance activity throughout our state, from Kodiak to Seward to Ketchikan, perhaps even in Wrangell.

I was with Senator Stedman and Representative Bynum just a couple of days ago in Ketchikan, and you can't believe what's happening with this shipbuilding boom. These are great paying jobs that have expanded by the hundreds in our state in the communities that I just mentioned, with room to grow as we get more ships from the Coast Guard and NOAA.

It is a really exciting element of our growing economy.

The same commitment to keep security that protects Alaska on the world stage must also be made to protect Alaskans in their homes and neighborhoods.

Crime rates are going down, as the Governor mentioned in his "State of the

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State” to all of you in many communities. But we can’t be complacent. Protecting our children, confronting addiction and mental health challenges, and keeping all communities throughout our state safe requires standing firmly with law enforcement and giving them our full support.

Nowhere have the stakes been higher in confronting the crime crisis in our state than in confronting the fentanyl crisis. Alaska has experienced the highest increase in fentanyl overdose rates in the nation for the past three years. We lost 400 young Alaskans just last year alone. Fentanyl is now responsible for more than two-thirds of all fatal overdoses in our state. These are our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews. They are our neighbors! I guarantee you, there’s not one member of the Legislature that doesn’t know someone who’s been impacted by this. These kids were our future! No longer.

Much of this poison was smuggled across the southern border, some across the northern border, reaching even our most remote villages in our state.

But we’re cracking down. The open border policies of the Biden administration are fortunately a thing of the past. When the Trump administration returned to office, illegal border crossings have dropped by 99 percent. For 8 consecutive months, zero illegal immigrants have been released into the country. The Working Families Tax Cuts Act included \$100 billion to secure the southern border and give our law enforcement the tools they needed to disrupt cartels, stop fentanyl before it reaches our towns and villages, and protect families and save lives. That’s the supply side of the challenge.

There’s also the demand side that we need to work on. This is something my team and I have been very focused on. If you take a look at one of these handouts, our One Pill Can Kill campaign. Some of you have helped me spread the word on this. My team and I have been working to get out to the schools, get out to the high schools, the junior high schools, and just talk to the kids about how dangerous this is. We all need to continue to do that, because these young kids are our future. Losing 400 a year is simply unacceptable.

We’ve also worked tirelessly to help our fishermen and coastal communities. As the chairman of the subcommittee with jurisdiction over fisheries, my team and I work on this issue relentlessly.

I have a handout here that goes through all the different areas in which we’re focused on fisheries for our state. This is something, again, we can work together on.

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My Save Our Seas Act legislation, the first one, the 2.0 one - we've had amendments to it - is still the most comprehensive ocean clean-up legislation ever passed by Congress. We continue to be focused on that.

We continue to confront the unfair global seafood trade practices that undercut Alaska fishermen and our communities. My team and I have worked very hard over years to secure the ban on Russian seafood trawlers. So there's no Russian seafood coming into America. When we got that done, they started sending it to China, literally to launder the fish through China. We shut that loophole down, and we will continue to push for stronger international coordination.

So the bad actors, like Russia and China - who, by the way, use slave labor on their ships, who have the worst environmental standards in the world, who ravage the high seas and distort seafood markets and really hurt our coastal communities - this is something we are very focused on continuing.

As I've been saying in many forums, we need to eat, and encourage Americans to eat, Alaskan "Freedom Fish," not Russian and Chinese "communist fish."

But we still have a lot of work to do. I passed the Alaska Salmon Task Force Act to bring together the best minds in the state - federal, tribal, university, Native, indigenous - all to come together, experts in our state, to understand and address the declines in Alaska salmon runs. We've had this great variability of salmon runs, some very strong, like in Bristol Bay. Others on the Yukon and Kuskokwim, and in Southeast, have been historically low.

Last year, I introduced the next phase of this comprehensive salmon focused legislation called the "Bycatch Reduction and Research Act" to close remaining knowledge gaps through tools like adult salmon tagging, faster genetic analysis of bycatch, and new technologies and policies to reduce bycatch and protect marine habitats.

I know you are all focused on these issues as well, and you have my commitment to continue working closely with this body on these critical issues.

I want to end my remarks with the focus on one of Alaska's greatest challenges, and that's affordable health care.

Health care costs remain stubbornly high. Like so many one-size-fits-all programs designed in D.C., Obamacare failed our state. The law crashed Alaska's health insurance market, dropping us from four insurers before

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Obamacare was enacted, to only one, eventually, leaving us now with just two. Premiums for Alaskans in the individual market skyrocketed to the highest anywhere in America. Insurance companies got rich, and Alaskans paid the price.

I'm still working with a bipartisan group of senators on a reform package to extend premium tax credits, after starting to vote to extend them in December of last year. We've also made progress - important progress, even historic progress - in bringing down the costs of prescription drugs for Alaskans, pairing long overdue PBM reform that we just passed last fall to rein in middlemen who have been driving up the costs of drugs, with our work to ensure that Americans no longer pay more than developed nations for the same medicines. This is what you call "most favored nation status," which we are now working on. It's very important.

But a new strategic approach on how federal funds are allocated and delivered to states with regard to health care has been needed for years.

For far too long, when it came to federal health care funding, Alaska was consistently left behind. Despite being the most rural state in America, and among the [costliest] places in our country to deliver health care, we received fewer federal health care dollars per capita than any other state, particularly when it comes to federal Medicaid, or what's called the Medicaid match.

I'm sure you're all familiar with that. The "FMAP" as they call it. Our state, when I first got to the Senate, had the lowest federal match of any state in the country for Medicaid: 50/50. We're now at about 51/49, still one of the lowest.

To make matters worse, Alaska is the only state in the country that does not use these kinds of schemes they call "provider taxes" or "state-directed payments," mechanisms used by states to inflate their federal Medicaid reimbursements, sometimes by hundreds of millions of dollars each year. This was not a failure of Alaska. This was a failure of the entire system.

Bringing federal health care funding to Alaska that actually reflects our challenges has been one of my top priorities since I joined the U.S. Senate. When we were debating the Working Families Tax Cuts Act, my team and I pushed very hard to include a provision that would correct this broken FMAP formula for Alaska. It would increase Alaska's federal match amount up to 65 percent, or about \$200 million annually from Medicaid to our state.

That has been something I've been working on for years, because I thought it was fair. I went to the White House. I went all the way to the President to pitch this. I went to all my Senate colleagues, Republican colleagues, to fix

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this Alaska unfair situation. I got them all on board. I got this provision in the bill.

But, on the one-yard line, as we were debating this bill late at night in the final stages of the process on this bill, Senate Democrats, led by their leader, Chuck Schumer, challenged in front of the parliamentarian - that you can do under budget reconciliation - this Alaska FMAP provision to try to get it stripped out of the bill.

We went in and we fought them. This is kind of like a court of law. You argue your case in front of the parliamentarian. Unfortunately, they prevailed. So after nearly a decade of work on this pro-Alaska bill, in the middle of the night, it was stripped out, and it was a gut punch. It was a gut punch. I had been working on this for a long time, and it was fair. It was the right thing to do. But we pivoted. We weren't going to take that defeat lying down.

Although our Alaska FMAP enhancement was stripped out, another program remained in the bill. That was the Rural Health Transformation Program in the Working Families Tax Cuts Act.

Originally, a total of \$25 billion for the whole country. My team and I - we got good cooperation from the White House and Senate Republicans, because they just saw how Alaska got screwed by our FMAP being taken out of the bill. We said, "Let's double it from \$25 to 50 billion." If we could not fix Alaska's FMAP immediately, we could reshape this bill to better benefit Alaska, which is what we did.

We doubled the size of that fund. We made it start in 2026 as opposed to 2028. We secured a \$100 million base amount for every state in the country, not per capita, just a base amount, which of course, you know, is great for our state. Most importantly, we rewrote the formula of that bill to ensure our whole state was considered rural as it relates to this bill.

Now, I'm sure you've all seen our state will receive - from this fund - approximately \$1.4 billion over the next five years to transform our health care system.

Take a look at the handout here. It has a lot of the provisions of it. Only Texas, which has a population 40 times bigger than ours, received a larger award. This is the biggest federal investment in Alaska health care history. Now, it's up to us to take advantage of this historic opportunity on health care. By the way, I appreciated the good discussion I had with a number of you on this yesterday, how to seize this opportunity.

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To be clear, more federal dollars alone do not automatically produce better health care outcomes. But targeted, thoughtful investments paired with accountability can be transformative. Someone asked me last year whether I could commit to protecting Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid when I gave these remarks last year. Let me be clear: The Working Families Tax Cuts Act doesn't touch Social Security, regardless of what you've seen in terms of ads on TV.

In fact, the Working Families Tax Cuts Act, as already mentioned, delivers a \$6,000 tax break for each senior. You combine that with our passage of the Social Security Fairness Act last year, our seniors and retirees across Alaska, including our heroic teachers and firefighters, are going to have thousands of dollars more in their pockets.

The bill does not touch Medicare. In fact, it strengthens Medicare by including what's called a "doc fix," which ensures Medicare patients will continue to be able to get the help they need from their doctor.

Finally, the bill does not touch Medicaid for Alaska. It is protected. The bill does not cut one dollar of Medicaid funding to our state. If we're going to talk honestly about Medicaid cuts, the only party that actually succeeded in cutting Medicaid funding as we wrote and debated the Working Families Tax Cuts Act, were Senate Democrats and Schumer as they stripped out the FMAP provision of our bill, cutting about \$200 million a year of Medicaid funding to Alaska. That is a fact.

Last year, I spoke about how the political parties in D.C. have two very different visions for Alaska - with D.C. based Democrats always looking to shut down and restrict our economy, killing jobs, and Republicans in D.C. wanting to unleash Alaska's full potential and private sector growth.

These differences in outlook don't just exist in the executive branch, they exist in the Legislature as well in D.C.

Here's a fact on this bill. It wasn't just the Alaska FMAP provision that Senate Democrats went to the parliamentarian to target against Alaska. They targeted and tried to work against every single provision I've told you about today, every Alaska priority, every Alaska win - of which there were many. They went to the parliamentarian to try to strip out of this historic bill.

I'm not being partisan here. These are just the facts. Alaskans should know who wants to help us and who wants to hurt us.

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This wasn't abstract. They went line by line, provision by provision, trying to strip Alaska priorities out of the bill before the Senate parliamentarian. They made this a priority.

Of course, they also tried to kill all the provisions I talked about on NPR-A, and ANWR, and Cook Inlet - all the resource development provisions. But they tried to kill so much more.

The \$300 million we secured for an icebreaker here in Juneau. The \$115 million we tried to secure to re-open Adak. The entire Rural Health Transformation Fund. The Alaska-specific flexibility Senator Murkowski and I got in the bill on SNAP and Medicaid. Hell, they even tried to strip out the whaling tax credit that supports our North Slope subsistence whaling communities and whaling captains.

Again and again, they came after Alaska.

Again and again, we got in the arena and fought - and we beat them on almost every one of these things.

Alaska is winning. Our comeback is real. It is happening, because of so many of these things. We need to continue to work together on all of these issues.

We've seen this moment before. The TAPS generation led a comeback for America - led by Alaska. Think about it. When our country desperately needed energy in the early 1970s, Alaskans stepped up and built something extraordinary. That effort was bigger than any one individual. It was about the future of our state and the strength of America. Alaskans who built TAPS still have an immense pride in what they accomplished. We all know the people who were a part of that. It's great to talk to them, even today, about it.

And today, we are also part of a moment that I think can be just as meaningful. This is particularly important for young Alaskans.

Like the TAPS generation, our kids, our grandkids, have the opportunity to be part of building something very consequential and bigger than themselves: the gas line, fully rebuilding our military capability, transforming our health care system, working in shipyards, opening new manufacturing centers across our state. Working together, we can give the next generations of Alaskans this incredible opportunity and this incredible gift.

Why does it all matter? It's jobs. It's the future. But, at the end of the day, it's about our kids and grandkids. Because when the state was created, our predecessors promised Alaskans a "homeland filled with opportunities." That future is now.

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I want to thank you all again for the great work you guys do. It's an honor of a lifetime to represent all of you in the United States Senate. We will continue to work with all of you on the great, generational opportunities we have before us. Thank you very much.

**Please report corrections to the Chief Clerk's office.**