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STATEMENT OF U. S. SENATOR TED STEVENS
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Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, my fellow legislators, friends - no one is more surprised that I am here than I, for had anyone told me after the elections last year that I would be allowed on the floor of this body in open session, I would have told him to go see Dr. Rader.

In all seriousness, we all know why I am permitted the honor to be here today and the honor to occupy a seat on the floor of the United States Senate. By an act of God, my good friend - and I know he was the personal friend of every person in this room, Bob Bartlett was retired prematurely from the task to which he devoted his life.

Our former governor gave me the duty to hasten to Washington to attempt to lift up the torch that Bob Bartlett carried so long and so well -- and, to the best of my ability, I shall do just that. As an appointive senator, I shall concentrate first on finishing, if I can, some of the projects Senator Bartlett did not have time to finish: - the A. C. S. sale must be completed, but only if it is in the best interest of the public which the A. C. S. is designed to serve; - the satellite ground station must be completed as soon as possible; - our native land claims must be fairly settled without years of endless litigation. This commitment to the settlement of the land claims is not only an Alaskan commitment - it is a national commitment. During the confirmation hearings on Secretary Hickel, Senator Jackson, Chairman of the Senate Interior Committee, promised his every effort to a legislative resolution this session. In return, Secretary Hickel agreed to maintain the "land freeze" for a period of two years; - the Jones Act must be amended to permit this state to meet its transportation responsibility through the Marine Highway; - and there are many other projects Bob started that I could not presume to take the time to even mention each one. I look forward to working with our new governor, as a man who has performed well as our Secretary of State. He has proven his ability as a leader and his succession to the governorship demonstrates the wisdom of our Alaska laws which provide smooth transition at the time of the change of our chief executive. I know that each of you will help him fulfill the responsibilities of government here in Alaska - and I also know that I can assure you that each of Alaska's congressional delegation welcomes the opportunity to assist you in doing so.

Each state in this union is entitled to two United States Senators - and one of them is entitled to assume the prerogatives of the state's senior senator. I became a senior senator ten days after my appointment. Some people may think this means I should hesitate to use those prerogatives because of the short time I have been in the Senate - but, Alaskans have the right

to the protection those prerogatives afford. And I shall not hesitate to use them at any time I feel a fellow Alaskan can be assisted - whether the Alaskan be a civil service employee who needs help in protecting his rights or, as was the case, an Alaskan who has attained the signal honor of being the first Alaskan ever nominated and confirmed as a member of the cabinet of the President of the United States.

Let me make one thing very clear - in exercising these prerogatives it makes no difference to me whether the person involved is a Democrat or a Republican. My concern is only whether he is an Alaskan and whether what he seeks will benefit Alaska.

I would be remiss if I did not tell you that during the debates upon Secretary Hickel's confirmation, Alaska was the only state with three United States senators on the floor of the Senate. Former Senator Ernest Gruening was there during the whole debate. He not only testified in favor of Wally's confirmation, Senator Gruening actively worked with us, night and day. He has been of great assistance to me personally, and I have asked him to use my office and my staff as he continues to work for Alaskans in Washington.

I cannot mention my staff without telling you of the magnificent gesture Vide Bartlett made to me. Perhaps many do not know that a senator must both hire a staff and buy equipment from the same fund. This means a new senator must normally have a small staff and purchase his equipment. Obviously, the staff may grow as the equipment account is liquidated.

Mrs. Bartlett permitted me to hire six of Bob's staff before their service to her in Bob's office expired - and, from the allowance she received for the closing of his office, she has paid this staff until yesterday. As a consequence, the experience of these staff people has not only helped me to get down to the tasks I have - but Vide's generosity means we have the basic equipment - the typewriters, dictating equipment, etc. - with which to work.

All in all, I am convinced more than ever that these actions demonstrate the true Alaskan philosophy - we must each do what we are able to do to assist Alaska and our fellow Alaskans - without partisan discord or an attempt to gain personal credit. We must share the Alaskan dream - a dream of an Alaska with the hopes of the twenty-first century springing up in the arctic, a dream of an Alaska with our native people guiding their own destiny on the strong foundation of a capital base that represents a generous nation's settlement of past wrongs; an Alaska in which our raw material resources and our fuel resources are blended in such a manner as to permit us to join the industrial states without pollution and with the protections that our fish, our game and our wilderness values require.

I know you share that dream - and each of us has a role in making it a reality. I pledge to you that my staff and I - so long as I am permitted by Alaskans to stay in Washington (and I hope that will be a long time) will work with you - each of you - to make the Alaskan dream come true.