

# Representative Chris Tuck

House Democratic Leader

---

## State of the State Response, January 22, 2014

Good evening...

I'm Chris Tuck, the new **House Democratic Leader**

And next to me is...

**Senator Hollis French**, the new **Senate Democratic Leader**.

**First...**

I would like to thank **Representative Kerttula** for her public service. Her leadership and statesmanship will be missed.

I would also like to thank my colleagues in selecting me as their leader. We have a great team put together and I appreciate their trust and faith in me.

Democrats want to make Alaska a place where:

- innovation and ideas flourish,
- **our resources are put to good use,**
- and where education is the highest quality

and, as a result...

- the economy thrives
- and **good jobs are plenty.**

Like centuries of Alaskans before us, we find confidence in how Alaskans watch out for each other and stick up for one other.

And...Like Alaska's founders at statehood...

who took control of our resources against outside interests intent on exploiting them...

**we believe in Alaska and its great potential.**

Hard work, dedication, and the will to succeed—these are the values that built and pioneered Alaska.

As elected leaders, it's our responsibility to put these values to work and to keep the well-being of our fellow Alaskans first in every decision we make.

We cannot give up on our hopes and our vision of what Alaska can be.

The governor has pushed the notions that...  
oil industry board room decisions hold the fate of Alaska,  
and that we cannot invest in our children's **future**.

If we give in to those wrong-headed ideas, then we have forsaken the dream of statehood.

Alaska Democrats aren't ready to give up on Alaska.

On the economy, energy and education—we are ready to lead.

Right now, more than ever,  
Alaska must make sure we are making smart investments,  
and being smart in the returns we demand.

**This is how we create jobs and opportunity for all Alaskans.**

Whether it's oil, gas, or anything else, Alaska must negotiate from a position of strength.

We want to partner with the oil industry and others  
who want to help develop our resources,  
but we **WILL NOT** take a back seat in those negotiations.

If we allow the state to sell our resources for less than they are worth,

If we accept less than Alaska's fair share,  
we undercut opportunities for Alaskans.

And worse, by giving away our oil, the governor took away Alaska's opportunity to  
rebuild our savings down the road.

It's not too late to turn that around on oil.

and we must not repeat those mistakes when it comes to getting Alaska's gas to  
Alaska's home and businesses and getting Alaska's gas to markets.

**We want a gasline...**

and democrats have long held that owning a piece of the pipe can be a great way  
to bring the full benefits of a gasline home to Alaskans.

However, as we saw with the Murkowski deal a few years ago, the devil is in the  
details.

And if we are going to make sure this is a good deal for Alaskans...

we must be **strong,**

**smart,**

**and diligent advocates** for Alaskans' interests in every step of the  
process.

We are prepared to do our job on your behalf to make sure we get a gasline that  
brings the maximum benefit to Alaskans.

We want a gasline, but we cannot afford to give away our gas like the governor  
did our oil.

Similarly, Alaska cannot afford to be penny wise and pound foolish when it comes  
to teaching our children and training our workforce.

We must make a lasting commitment to education.

It is the best investment we can make.

We must give our schools the resources they need so our children are not forced into overcrowded classrooms.

We're counting on them for our future, and they should be able to count on us for the resources they need year after year.

But what have we been doing? Short changing education and crippling it. And once crippled – no more funding until there is reform.

The job of teaching never ends.

That's why we are still advocating an increase to the per-student classroom funding...

so we can stop cutting teachers and start building the potential of our future generations.

Unfortunately, over the last few years... Alaska has gone from

**Savings... to deficits,**

and our schools have gone from

**innovating... to laying off teachers.**

**We are ready** to turn that around, and get Alaska back on track for the strong future our forefathers envisioned.

So know this:

WE have NOT forgotten who we work for.

We work for Alaskans first,  
and Alaskans always!

With that, here is **Senator Hollis French**, the **Senate Democratic Leader**.