

(776-34)

STATEMENT BY SEN. STROM THURMOND (D-SC) IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY BILL McDOUGALD, WASHINGTON EVENING STAR, JUNE 12, 1958.

Do you plan to filibuster against Alaska Statehood?

No, but I intend to present my reasons for opposing the Alaska Statehood Bill as forcefully and persuasively as I can.

Will most other Southern Senators oppose Alaska Statehood?

I cannot take the responsibility of saying what other Southern Senators will do. I have reason to believe, however, that some of them share my views on this question.

Why are you opposed to Alaska Statehood?

I oppose Alaska Statehood for a number of reasons, some of which are as follows:

1. It is an undeveloped territory, in which the principal activities are those conducted by the Federal government. I have grave doubts that Alaska is economically capable of assuming the responsibilities that go with Statehood.

2. The admission of Alaska, a non-contiguous territory, would set a precedent for the admission of other non-contiguous territories, the customs and traditions of which have non-American roots.

3. 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 increased Federal aid to all States, and State sovereignty would be further diminished.

(76-54)

4. It is possible to provide Alaska with a form of government which would give its citizens a greater degree of local self-government without the disadvantages of Statehood.

5. The Alaska Statehood bill raises grave legal questions which have not been answered. For example, the section authorizing the President to withdraw Northern 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 would set a precedent for the invasion of the sovereignty of other States by the Federal government.

6. The provision of the bill granting public land to the State of Alaska is the greatest "give-away" ever incorporated in a Statehood bill. This gift is not in the interest of the people who live in the Territory of Alaska, nor in the interest of the United States.

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