

Hello, I'm Hollis French, and I represent West Anchorage in the State Senate.

I'm here tonight, running for re-election because I love this job, and because I believe that the experience I've gained over the last two years will serve the district well over the next four.

My priorities are education, economic development, and public safety. Allow me to address each in turn.

Education. My son attends West High, and I am a graduate of UAA. I am a strong believer in our local schools and hometown university.

This year the Legislature responded to budget pressures on school districts throughout the State by passing the single largest increase in education funding ever. In a bipartisan effort that I was proud to be a part of, we helped those school districts avoid pink slips and layoffs.

At the University level, we also delivered a healthy increase in funding. And the University is a bridge to my second priority, which is economic development.

The first and most important element to a strong economy is a well-educated workforce.

The other key ingredients are technical know-how, high levels of capital investment, and the last element is something we Alaskans have always had, and that's entrepreneurial zeal.

Obviously, the greatest economic opportunity for our state lies in getting our natural gas to market. The construction and operation of the Natural Gas Pipeline will be the signature economic event for the next twenty years.

The stakes are enormously high. Each penny – each single cent difference in the tariff on transporting our gas to market can mean as much as \$100 million over the life of the project.

I spent thirteen years working in the oil industry – five years on a rig in Cook Inlet, and eight years on the North Slope. I look forward to bringing that experience to bear on this issue and the gas line proposals are analyzed, debated, and ultimately voted on in Juneau.

Finally, let me say a few words about public safety. After I left the oil industry, I went to law school and then worked six years from 1996 to 2002 as a state prosecutor. I learned during that time that Alaska's women and children are subjected to some of the highest rates in the nation when it comes to sexual assault and abuse. That is shameful. As a prosecutor, I worked to hold the individuals who commit these crimes accountable for their actions, and I continued that effort in Juneau.

Last year I sponsored and passed a bill which put repeat sex offenders in a class by themselves, and then puts them away for longer periods. This year I sponsored and passed a measure that doubles the length of Domestic Violence Protective Orders.

In closing, let me say that I believe that the problems and issues which confront our state can be overcome. I am optimistic about Alaska. I have met many of you at your door. I have spoken to many of you one on one. I look forward to returning to Juneau to continue working on the issues that concern YOU.

I'm Hollis French, and I'd be honored to have your vote on Primary Day in August, and Election Day in November.