

What's good for the goose, is good for the 'grander'

Our latest entry in the "let them eat cake" sweepstakes comes from a member of the Alaska Congressional delegation who made national headlines last week when he complained bitterly about the quality of life in Washington D.C. and how hard it is to live in the nation's capitol.

Senator Ted Stevens has the distinction of being publically "ink-lashed" by one of the nation's largest newspapers for his loud and long complaints about what a rotten place Washington D.C. is to live.

He made the cry during a debate on extending a further tax break to members of Congress to help defray the costs of living in Washington.

There was a move afoot to not extend a further tax break to the members of Congress who so direly need that tax break.

You remember Congress. That's the group of elected "men of the people" who voted to shut down the Bureau of Indian Affairs day schools.

Yes, that's them, the same ones who voted to cut off general assistance payments to Alaska Natives; who voted to radically curtail hot lunch programs to the poor school children in the nation's ghettos, and who voted to cut back aid to dependent children, along with other social programs too numerous to mention.

And now that august body was involved in a debate about tax breaks for themselves and Senator Stevens charged to the floor not to defend fiscal constraint but to defend his own tax break. Stevens contended that Washington was no place to put a capitol, that it was full of muggers and people out to do others harm and therefore Congress deserved the "break."

All of this bad mouthing came in the form of a debate over one more privilege for a privileged few known as the U.S. Congress.

We find particular irony in the senator's position on this matter.

Here is the same man who publically defended the cutback of general assistance payments by saying that the federal government never intended to grant general assistance forever.

Here is the same man who said the state could fund the BIA schools, and Mount Edgecumbe, the only widely recognized alternative school for Alaska Natives in the state. All this knowing that the state can't and probably won't.

Senator Stevens stood at the forefront of President Reagan's budget program and fought for fiscal restraint in federal spending. In that fight, he adopted the president's belief that biting the bullet will help improve the overall economy and bring all living standards up.

Well, we would respectfully submit that Senator Stevens practice what he has forced others to practice. Perhaps he could live a little more frugally as he is asking the people of Alaska and the nation to do and live with a little less.

After all, if the federal government had intended for Congress to live with such tax breaks, it surely would have said so long ago.