Alaskans For Begich – “Two Views”
9/18/14

**Pegge:** Hi, I’m Mark Begich’s mom.

**Deborah:** And I’m Deborah, his wife.

**Pegge:** And we can tell you how Mark’s always been frugal.

**Deborah:** She means cheap.

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**Anchorage Daily News:** “[Begich] Was The Irrepressible Upstart Whom Everybody Knew Would Someday Measure Up To The Cliche Headline ‘Hometown Boy Makes Good.’” Reported the Anchorage Daily News in June 2003, “He was the irrepressible upstart whom everybody knew would someday measure up to the cliche headline "Hometown Boy Makes Good." He's there now. The city now starts in earnest to meet Mark Begich, his wife, Deborah Bonito, and 11-month-old son, Jacob, at a formal ceremony and picnic Tuesday. The inauguration starts with an hourlong public ceremony at 4 p.m. at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts followed by a picnic in Town Square Park. A series of neighborhood picnics will be held July 19 and 20. Begich is the first municipal mayor born and raised in Anchorage.” [Anchorage Daily News, 6/27/03]

**Begich Got First Business License At Age Of 13.** Reported the Anchorage Daily News in February 2007, “As for why he would be willing to make this issue his first veto, Begich talked in a phone interview Monday about getting his first business license at 13 and opening a teen nightclub at age 16. People are capable of different things at different ages, he said, and a young commissioner can be a valuable addition to a city board.” [Anchorage Daily News, 2/7/07]

**Begich Began Business Career By Selling Gifts, Handcrafted Jewelry, Opened Teen Nightclub At The Age Of 16.** Reported the Anchorage Daily News in June 2003, “The entrepreneurial protege attended Anchorage schools including Nunaka Valley and Lake Otis elementary schools, Steller Secondary and the University of Alaska Anchorage. His first venture was to sell gifts and silver necklaces and rings he made, at the Sports Arena. When he was 16, he opened the Motherlode teen club where Sullivan Arena is today. Next, he joined the team of Anchorage businesswoman May Jefford, starting out as a stock boy in a warehouse and quickly becoming the manager of one of her stores.” [Anchorage Daily News, 6/27/03]

**Begich Did Not Attend College, Instead Went To Work For Family Business To Put His Siblings Through School.** Reported the Los Angeles Times in November 2008, “Far from following Stevens’ pedigree as a military pilot and Harvard-educated lawyer, Begich never attended college. He went to work in his family's apartment maintenance business to take care of his mother and put his siblings through college, in a biography his backers say reinforces his stature as a pragmatic Democrat who can survive in a state still dominated by the GOP.” [Los Angeles Times, 11/20/08]

**Begich Still Kept Tools In His Truck After Years Of Helping His Mom Manage Apartment Buildings.** Reported the New York Times in December 2008, “Mr. Begich was 10 when his father died. He says he still makes a habit of keeping tools in his truck after years of helping his mother, Pegge, manage apartment buildings the family owned. He has also worked in the vending and restaurant industries and in real estate.” [New York Times, 12/4/08]

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**Mark Begich Supports A Balanced Budget Amendment To The Constitution**

**Headline:** Associated Press: “Begich signs on to proposed constitutional amendment to require balanced federal budgets.” [Associated Press, 7/12/13]

**Begich Voted To Express The Sense Of The Senate For Consideration Of A Balanced Budget Amendment.** In March 2011, Senator Begich voted for a Lee, R-Utah, amendment no. 115 that would express the sense of the Senate supporting consideration of an amendment
Begich Voted For A Balanced-Budget Amendment To The Constitution. In December 2011, Senator Begich voted for passage of the joint resolution that would propose a constitutional amendment that would require a balanced budget starting in the fifth fiscal year after ratification by three-fourths of the states. Under the proposal, three-fifths of the entire House and Senate would be required to approve deficit spending, except in times of congressionally declared war or in the face of a serious military threat. The proposal would not count the Social Security trust fund in calculating overall receipts or outlays. [CQ; Vote 30, 3/2/11]


Begich Voted Against Obama & Senate Democrats’ Trillion Dollar Tax Increases

Begich Voted Against Obama Budget That Would Have Increased taxes By $1.5 Trillion. Reported CNN in February 2012, “President Obama unveiled a $3.8 trillion budget request Monday that hikes taxes on the rich, spends new money on infrastructure and education, but does little to reform the entitlement programs that pose the biggest long-term threat to the federal budget. . . . The budget also raises taxes by $1.5 trillion, including a provision to allow the expiration of Bush-era tax cuts on families earning more than $250,000 a year, as well as incorporating the so-called Buffett Rule that requires households earning more than $1 million to pay a 30% tax rate.” [CNN, 2/13/12; Vote #97, 5/16/12]

Begich, Murkowski Voted Against Senate Democratic Budget Proposal. In March 2013, Begich and Murkowski voted against Adoption of the concurrent resolution that would set broad spending and revenue targets over the next 10 years. It would allow up to $966 billion in discretionary spending for fiscal 2014, the statutory level reflecting automatic cuts known as sequestration, but would call for replacing the sequester with a combination of revenue increases and spending cuts. It would direct the Finance Committee to produce legislation that would increase revenue by $975 billion over 10 years. [Vote #92, 3/23/13; CQ]

Senate Democratic Budget Proposed Raising Taxes By $975 Billion. Reported the New York Times in March 2013, “The Senate plan, by contrast, includes $100 billion in upfront infrastructure spending to bolster the economy and calls for special fast-track rules to overhaul the tax code and raise $975 billion over 10 years in legislation that could not be filibustered. Even with that tax increase and prescribed spending cuts, the Senate plan would leave the government with a $566 billion annual deficit in 10 years, and $5.2 trillion in additional debt over that window.” [New York Times, 3/23/13]
KSRM: “Begich Is Taking A Stand That No One In Congress Should Be Immune To Budget Cuts.” Reported KSRM in April 2013, “U.S. Senator Mark Begich is taking a stand that no one in Congress should be immune to budget cuts, as Begich is voluntarily returning a portion of his salary to the U.S Treasury Department and has begun furloughing his staff due to the sequester.” [KSRM, 4/3/13]

Begich Cut Over A Million Dollars From His Office Budget. During an interview on KFAR, Begich said, “. . . I will tell you this Congress has not received one dime of increase because I have made sure of that during my actions here and second to that in my office, I can only speak about my office, I have cut my budget over a million dollars and on top of that when my team went on furlough, I took the exact same amount of pay that I was on furlough, those days they took, and I donated it to folks. For example the veterans museum, I donated to different organizations because I felt if they are taking a cut I need to take a cut. So I can’t speak about other people, I can only talk about me.” [KFAR interview, 5/20/14]


Begich One Of Few Senators Willing To Sacrifice Pay During Sequester. Reported The Hill in April 2013, “Only a few senators are planning to forfeit a portion of their salaries to charity or the U.S. Treasury while sequestration is in effect, according to a survey conducted by The Hill. The Senate last month passed a measure urging members of the upper chamber to forgo 20 percent of their salary during sequestration. Most senators, however, are keeping quiet on whether they will follow through. . . . in a survey of Senate offices by The Hill, only Graham and Sens. Mark Begich (D-Alaska), Claire McCaskill (Mo.), Mike Lee (R-Utah) and Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) have indicated they would give up some of their take-home pay.” [The Hill, 4/3/13]

Begich Announced Furloughs For More Than Half Of Staff, Returning Part Of His Own Pay In Response To Sequester. Reported the Daily Caller in April 2013, “Democratic Alaska Sen. Mark Begich announced Wednesday that he has begun furloughing staff to reduce his office budget in the wake of the sequester. According to Begich press secretary Heather Handyside, 26 of Begich’s 41 staffers in both Alaska and Washington, D.C. are being furloughed. ‘They’re taking a temporary pay cut for the remainder of the budget year, and they will reduce their hours accordingly,’ Handyside said, telling The Daily Caller that she herself is being furloughed. Begich will also return part of his salary to the Treasury.” [Daily Caller, 4/3/13]

Begich, On Pay Cut And Furloughs: “There Is No Reason That Members Of Congress Shouldn’t Feel The Pinch Like Everyone Else.” Reported the Daily Caller in April 2013, “‘We need to be making responsible cuts wherever we can, and there is no reason that members of Congress shouldn’t feel the pinch like everyone else,’ Begich said in a statement. ‘This won’t solve our spending problem on its own, but I hope it is a reminder to Alaskans that I am willing to make the tough cuts, wherever they may be, to get our spending under control.’” [Daily Caller, 4/3/13]

Kenai Daily News Editorial Praised Begich’s Leadership In Cutting Salary, Furloughing Staff During Sequestration – “ Hats Off To Alaska Sen. Mark Begich.” Wrote the editorial board of the Kenai Daily News in April 2013, “Hats off to Alaska Sen. Mark Begich, who set an example last week by furloughing 26 staff members and returning some of his own salary to the U.S. Treasury. In announcing the cuts, the Anchorage Democrat noted that ‘there is no reason that members of Congress shouldn’t feel the pinch like everyone else.’ The staffs who will be taking a couple of unpaid days off are the highest paid, according to the senator’s office, and that, too, is how it ought to be. Leadership begins at the top and, while no one can afford a cut in pay — we tend to spend to the level at which we earn — those who make more money generally have more discretionary areas to cut.” [Editorial, Kenai Daily News, 4/8/13]
Begich Blew The Whistle On An Automatic Pay Raise For Senators & Repeatedly Voted Against A Congressional Pay Raise

Begich Called Out Executive Order For Congressional Pay Raise. Reported the Associated Press in January 2013, “Alaska's U.S. senators say they oppose an executive order that would give members of Congress a pay raise. Senator Mark Begich said on his Facebook page that the American people don't get an automatic pay raise, and neither should members of Congress. . . . President Barack Obama signed an executive order last week that would provide federal workers and members of Congress with a pay increase. Rank-and-file senators and representatives would see their salaries go from $174,000 a year to $174,900 a year.” [Associated Press, 1/1/13]

- Begich Voted For Passage Of American Taxpayer Relief Act Of 2012 – Bill Included Provisions Blocking Cost Of Living Adjustment For Congressional Pay For FY2013. In January 2013, Begich voted for Passage of the bill that would permanently extend the 2001 and 2003 tax rates for individual income below $400,000 and joint-filer income below $450,000. Rates for income above those thresholds would rise to 39.6 percent from 35 percent. . . . It prohibited cost of living adjustments for the pay of members of Congress. [CQ; Vote 251, 1/1/13; HR 8 text]


Begich Introduced Measure To Block Congressional Pay Raise For 2011 And Bar Members From Voting On Their Own Pay Raises – “No Reason” For Pay Raise Given Economy. Reported the Associated Press in April 2010, “U.S. Sen. Mark Begich wants to freeze pay for members of Congress. Begich's office says the Alaska Democrat introduced a budget amendment to a resolution passed by the Senate Budget Committee that would freeze pay for 2011. The full Senate has approved a measure that would stop automatic raises for next year. Begich's office says he supported that but that his amendment is separate and, if passed on the floor, would bar members from voting on pay raises for themselves, too. Begich said in a statement that there's ‘no reason’ congressional members should get a pay increase this year. He said the economy's fragile and Alaskans are working to find or keep jobs.” [Associated Press, 4/23/10]

Begich Cosponsored 2009 Bill To Repeal Automatic Pay Raises For Members Of Congress. In March 2009, Begich cosponsored S. 542 to repeal the provision of law allowing for automatic pay raises for members of Congress. [S. 542, introduced 3/6/09]

2009: Begich Voted For FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Bill – Bill Included Provision Blocking Automatic Cost-Of-Living Adjustment For Members Of Congress. In March 2009, Senator Begich voted for a motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the bill that would provide $410 billion in discretionary spending in fiscal 2009 for federal departments and agencies covered by nine unfinished fiscal 2009 spending bills. Those bills are: Agriculture; Commerce-Justice-Science; Energy-Water; Financial Services; Interior-Environment; Labor-HHS-Education; Legislative Branch; State-Foreign Operations; and Transportation-HUD. It would also provide $100 million for the U.S. Secret Service and block the automatic cost-of-living adjustment for members of Congress in 2010. [CQ; Vote 96, 3/10/09]

2010: Begich Voted For Continuing Appropriations Legislation That Prohibited Pay Raise Through 2012. Reported Politifact in January 2011, “On Dec. 21, 2010, Congress passed a stop-gap funding bill that included the two-year pay freeze for federal civilian employees. It passed on a 193-to-165 vote in the House; and 79-16 in the Senate.” Reported Politifact in November 2011, “And in 2010, Congress froze general service employees base pay through December 2012 so that meant member pay was also frozen.” [Vote 289, 12/21/10; Politifact, 1/1/11; Politifact, 11/23/11]

Don Young: “Mark's Done A Great Job Of Very Frankly Representing People. He's Not Always On My Page, That's For Sure, But He's Done A Good Job.” Reported the Anchorage Daily News in January 2014, “Begich, a Democrat, ‘is drawing praise from across the aisle from one of Alaska's top Republicans,’ The Hill said on its campaign blog. ‘Mark's done a great job of very frankly representing people. He's not always on my page, that's for sure, but he's done a good job,’ Young told The Hill, according to the blog item.” [Anchorage Daily News, 1/15/14]

Murkowski: Begich Is Working On Issues Important to Alaska Constituents - “Begich Has Been Keying In On The Issues That I Think Alaskans Are Worried About And Doing What He Was Tasked To Do.” Reported the Anchorage Daily News in January 2014, “Asked how Begich was doing, she said, ‘As an Alaska delegation, we've got to be working on those issues that are important to our constituents. Sen. Begich has been keying in on the issues that I think Alaskans are worried about and doing what he was tasked to do.’ U.S. Rep. Don Young last week said Begich was in a tough race in a conservative state, but also said the Democrat was doing ‘a good job’ in the Senate.” [Anchorage Daily News, 1/20/14]

Anchorage Daily News: “Begich Has Spent Much Of His Time In Washington . . . Focused On More Local And Regional Issues Of Vital Importance To His State.” Reported the Anchorage Daily News in March 2013, “For Alaskans, Begich has spent much of his time in Washington away from the Senate floor glare of controversial votes, focused on more local and regional issues of vital importance to his state. Begich crafted an accord that enables Indian Health Service clinics to treat non-Native veterans, and he helped members of the National Guard or National Reserve gain access to seats on military planes, a perk previously limited to active-duty soldiers. Begich is working with Republicans to expedite the export of liquefied natural gas to NATO and to Japan, Alaska's largest trading partner. Crossing party lines to work with Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski, the state's senior senator, Begich preserved surcharge-free mail delivery to Bush Alaska and blocked a plan to relocate the F-16 squadron at Eielson Air Force Base. The two senators have also teamed up to push legislation requiring all oil tankers in the Prince William Sound to be escorted by two tugs. As part of the 2009 stimulus package, Begich helped secure $197 million to modernize Alaska's military bases and $152 million to build a hospital in Nome. And the senator has
proposed the creation of a U.S. ambassador to the Arctic and an Arctic Advisory Council to help coordinate policies of the United States, Canada and the other seven countries in the region.” [Anchorage Daily News, 3/31/13]

Begich, On Making Sure Alaska Is Represented In Legislation: “Almost Every Issue Has An Alaska Nexus . . . And If That's Not In, Don't Talk To Me.” Reported the National Journal in February 2013, “Identify a big national issue, and Begich drills it down to an Alaska issue. ‘Almost every issue has an Alaska nexus,’ Begich said. ‘And then the poor leadership gets to hear from me on a regular basis, why this is important to Alaska, whatever that little segment is, and if that's not in, don't talk to me.’” [National Journal, 2/1/13]