

MARK BEGICH

U.S. Senator for the State of



ALASKA

January 25, 2012

Back to Work, Focused on Moving Economy Forward



January 2012 - Sen. Begich meets with staff and managers of Alaska's Home Depot stores in Anchorage.

With a focus on jobs and economic recovery, the Senate is back in session this week. We have much on our upcoming agenda, including reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration, which is vitally important to Alaska with more pilots per capita than any other state. I am also hopeful we'll soon agree on a transportation package to fund highway and road improvements putting thousands of Americans to work.

Last night, the President delivered his annual State of the Union address. He hit on many important issues, including his focus on the success of the middle class, protecting and promoting small businesses, and using American ingenuity to continue to move this country forward. He also talked about more oil and gas development in the U.S., but did not mention specifics. I am [looking forward to the details](#) and to hearing about how the Administration plans to move forward on

UPCOMING EVENTS

[Friday, 02/03/2012](#)

[12:00 p.m. \(Alaska\)](#)

[Alaska World Affairs Council](#)

[Luncheon](#)

[Dena'ina Convention Center](#)

[Friday, 02/03/2012](#)

[5:30 p.m. \(Alaska\)](#)

[Early Learning Town Hall hosted by Thread Alaska](#)

[Snow Goose Restaurant Theater](#)

[Saturday, 02/04/2012](#)

[11:30 a.m. \(Alaska\)](#)

[Yukon Quest Race](#)

[Downtown Fairbanks](#)

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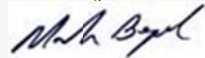
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oil and gas development in Alaska. We have made good progress on NPR-A and the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas, and I am hopeful that progress will continue. We know we can create tens of thousands of jobs with development of oil and gas in the off-shore waters of Alaska's Arctic.

I support his commitment to immediately pass a year-long extension of the payroll tax cut currently helping 160 million middle-class Americans, including 300,000 Alaskans, pay their bills and balance their checkbooks. I was heartened by recent news that Alaska's economy continues to perform better than the rest of the nation. Our 7.3 unemployment rate is well below the national average, but there is much more work to be done.

Just two weeks after returning from Afghanistan to visit Alaska-based service members, I'm also focused on whether U.S. policy there is sound. With nearly one in 10 troops in Afghanistan hailing from Alaska-based units, I thanked our military men and women for their excellent work in incredibly tough conditions. I continue to support the planned withdrawal of combat troops by the end of 2014 - or sooner if conditions justify.

Sincerely,



Senator Mark Begich

[Begich Hails Visitor Industry Boost, Appointment of Alaskan](#)

[Obama Delay on Keystone Pipeline Wrong Decision, Says Senator](#)

[Begich Asks NOAA for Update on Marine Debris Plan](#)

Begich Hails Visitor Industry Boost, Appointment of Alaskan

Senator Begich last week [welcomed a proposal](#) by President Obama to boost America's visitor industry, a critical sector for Alaska's economy, and the President's appointment of an Alaska tourism official to an important national visitor industry advisory board. "Travel and tourism is critically important to Alaska, driving more than \$2 billion in spending annually and employing in excess of 40,000 people," Begich said. The President signed an Executive Order directing the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior to co-lead an interagency task force promoting domestic and international travel opportunities throughout the United States, with the goal of expanding job creation. The President also announced the appointment of new members to the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, including Alaskan Kirk Hoessle, president and CEO of Alaska Wildland Adventures. Begich recommended Hoessle for

the position. With more than 30 years of experience in the visitor industry, he currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Alaska Travel Industry Association.



January 15, 2012 - Sen. Begich pins the 1/25 Combat Action Badge on Sergeant Ricardo Tucker of Fort Wainwright's Stryker Brigade Combat Team.



January 14, 2012 - Sen. Begich meets with marines at Patrol Base Boldak in Afghanistan's Helmand Province. Also pictured is Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon and Rep. Bill Huizenga of Michigan.

Obama Delay on Keystone Pipeline Wrong Decision, Says Senator

Saying America [needs more domestic energy](#) and the jobs its development produces, Senator Begich criticized the Obama Administration's opposition to the Keystone XL Pipeline. "This delay underscores the need to keep moving forward on developing Alaska's enormous energy potential in the Arctic," Begich said. "Good progress has been made getting to work drilling offshore in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas and in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska this year. We must keep that momentum going. I'll also continue to push for oil and gas development in the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This area was set aside by Congress specifically for oil and gas production, and it needs to be part of a comprehensive energy plan for the country."



January 10, 2012 - Sen. Begich hosts wounded warriors in his Washington D.C. office to thank and recognize them for their sacrifice and service. Pictured is Sergeant Davin Dumar, a member of the 1/25 Stryker Brigade Combat



January 12, 2012 - Showing support for Cordovans who experienced over 15 feet of snow, Sen. Begich wore a Copper River Fleece at work, a Cordova hallmark.

Team stationed at Fort Wainwright, and wife Dana.

Begich Asks NOAA for Update on Marine Debris Plan

Sen. Mark Begich [sent a letter to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administrator](#) (NOAA) Dr. Jane Lubchenco [asking for some answers](#) regarding plans to deal with the debris that is expected to hit the shores of western states, including Alaska, from the devastating tsunami which hit northern Japan last year. "Residents of Alaska and other western coastal states are understandable concerned by the estimated 25-million tons of debris swept into the North Pacific during last year's devastating tsunami which hit northern Japan, Begich writes. "Some wind-driven fishing floats are reported to have reached shore in Washington and Alaska. In the letter, Begich asks for the answers to several questions including how \$1 million allocated for tsunami debris monitoring and cleanup will be spent, an update on the status of the debris field and latest projections for transit times; and special concerns such as dealing with potentially hazardous waste.

This week's website features



[Afghanistan 2012](#)

Sen. Begich spent 2 1/2 days visiting U.S. military operations in Afghanistan. His trip included stops in Kabul, Camp Bastion in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan and Kandahar. During the trip Sen. Begich visited with deployed Alaska-based military personnel from Fort Wainwright's 1/25 Stryker Brigade Combat Team.

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[Alaska Report - January 2012](#)

Senator Mark Begich hosts the January 2012 edition of the [Alaska Report](#), a show highlighting people, issues and programs impacting Alaska.

This month's episode focused on the Alaska Sealife Center.

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