



Office of U.S. Senator Mark Begich

Alaska :: April 2011

Official website :: begich.senate.gov

Fighting for Alaska's Seniors



Senior citizens contribute enormously to Alaska's rich diversity, economy, and community. I have long been a supporter of senior citizens and of the programs like Social Security and Medicare that our seniors deserve and depend on. As your U.S. Senator, I believe the federal budget should not be balanced on the backs of our senior citizens. That is why I have worked to champion senior citizens' rights by:

Strengthening Social Security

- *Protecting Benefits* – More than 71,000 Alaskans receive Social Security benefits, including 11,000 elderly residents who otherwise would live in poverty. Alaska's seniors have earned these benefits and I will fight to keep them.
- *Social Security is not Broken* – Social Security is not contributing to the deficit. In fact, it had a \$2.6 trillion surplus in 2010 and will be able to pay all benefits fully through 2036. I believe Social Security can be strengthened, but we must keep the promises made to Alaska's seniors and all Americans.
- *Social Security Fairness Act* – I co-sponsored the Social Security Fairness Act of 2009, which allows public employees to receive Social Security benefits earned from other employment.

The GOP budget plan would turn Medicare into a voucher system, doubling the cost for the average senior, and cut \$1.4 trillion from Medicaid's health care services. I oppose these cuts—Alaskans have earned these benefits and I will fight to preserve them.



YouTube
youtube.com/USSenatorMarkBegich



Facebook
facebook.com/begich



Twitter
twitter.com/senatorbegich

Protecting Medicare and Medicaid

- *Medicare* – Medicare serves Alaskans 65 and older, those with certain disabilities, and those with End-Stage Renal Disease. Medicare costs are rising, but we can and must improve the program while guaranteeing benefits. I support responsible changes like improving reimbursements to medical providers and expanding Part B coverage for mental health care services.
- *Health Care Reform* – Health Care Reform closes the Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage gap, or ‘donut hole’. It removes caps on life-time coverage, provides free wellness visits, and prevents denial of care because of a pre-existing condition. Overall, Health Care Reform will improve coverage for nearly 60,000 Alaska seniors.

Opposing the GOP’s Plan which Costs Alaska Seniors

The GOP plan would privatize Medicare and cut \$1.4 trillion from Medicaid’s health care services. These changes would:

- *Force Alaskans off Medicaid* – Medicaid provides health coverage to over 100,000 Alaskans. The GOP budget plan turns Medicaid into a block grant to states, requiring larger and larger cuts over time, with no guarantee of care. An estimated 42,794 Alaskans would be forced off of Medicaid, including Alaskans relying on Medicaid for long term care.
- *Re-Open the Donut Hole* – The GOP plan would re-open the donut hole in prescription drug costs, costing Alaska seniors an additional \$1.4 million in 2012.
- *Double the Cost of Medicare* – Under the GOP plan, out-of-pocket expenses for seniors would double to more than \$12,500 annually.

Supporting Seniors’ Quality of Life

- *Helping Seniors with High Energy Costs* – I am a strong supporter of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) which provides an average of \$1,300 in heat and energy assistance to more than 19,000 Alaska households, particularly to seniors and low income working families.
- *Passed the Elder Justice Act* – The Elder Justice Act, passed in March 2011, works to prevent and respond to physical, financial, and emotional abuse of seniors.

