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Contact: Julie Hasquet, Press Secretary

(907) 258-9304 office

(907) 350-4846 cell

Alaskans Join Sen. Begich for Tele Town Hall *Begich connects with thousands from Washington*

With a top priority of staying connected to Alaskans, Sen. Mark Begich held a Telephone Town Hall on Wednesday night, talking about a variety of important issues including energy, health care and jobs. Thousands of Alaskans joined the town hall to ask Begich about Alaska issues, national issues and to share their opinions.

Fulfilling a pledge to host interactive telephone town halls, Begich reached out to an estimated 40,000 Alaskans after 5 p.m. Alaska time. Potential town hall participants receive a message from the senator inviting them to stay on the line and instantly join the town hall. An estimated 9,000 Alaskans participated in the call.

“The telephone town halls are a great way to talk to Alaskans, hear their thoughts and answer questions. With jobs and the economy top of mind for many, my goal is to stay connected as much as I can,” Begich said. “Alaskans continue to set the standard for being politically aware and these town halls provide the perfect way to have a discussion, even when I’m in Washington.”

Questions covered a variety of topics, including:

- The EPA’s ability to regulate greenhouse gases.
- Progress of health care legislation.
- Efforts to improve Medicare.
- Potential reform of the No Child Left Behind Act.
- The status of job creation measures.

Wednesday’s tele town hall is the first in a new series of monthly calls allowing Alaskans to directly interact with Sen. Begich from their own home. In the coming weeks, Sen. Begich will equip his website with a “Call Me” feature. This will allow Alaskans to request invitations to future telephone town hall meetings.

“Alaskans told me that they enjoyed my previous telephone town hall meetings,” Begich said. “I look forward to hosting future town halls, both in person and over the telephone, allowing me to better serve Alaskans in the United States Senate.”

At the end of the telephone call, Alaskans had the ability to leave voicemails with other questions and topics. Sen. Begich received over two hours of voicemails from about 100 participants.

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