



Mark Begich for Governor

KEEPING ALASKA FAMILIES SAFE

There has been a systemic failure to address the exploding opioid epidemic and increasing crime within our communities that has led Alaska to be ranked #1 for crime nationwide. It is unacceptable. As Mayor of Anchorage, Mark Begich added more than 80 police officers and placed 2 prosecutors in the U.S. Attorney's office who were part of a strategic effort to get drug dealers, gang members, and violent criminals behind bars and off our streets. And his efforts delivered real results. Drunk driving arrests went up and injury accidents went down. Fewer domestic violence offenders needed to be rearrested, and the city was vigilant in prosecuting gang-related activity. Now, Mark Begich wants to bring that tough, smart, and comprehensive approach to the State to address crime and keep Alaska communities safe.

Address Opioid Epidemic, Substance Abuse, & Mental Health Issues:

Drugs or alcohol are involved in the vast majority of crimes. According to a report released in 2016, 65% of Alaska prisoners suffered from some form of mental health problem while 80% had drug or alcohol addiction. Alcohol and drug abuse are estimated to have an economic cost of \$3.1 billion a year. There need to be adequate detox and treatment options that will help combat this disease and keep our communities safer.

- **Dedicate funding for treatment beds:** Funding needs to be clearly dedicated and directed towards ensuring treatment beds are available upon need in local communities. Previous budgets have included broad references or mentions of such funding, but the connection to services was lost in systemic failure or otherwise consumed in spending.
- **Eliminate wait times for treatment:** By clearly dedicating and directing funding to treatment beds, we can work towards eliminating wait times which currently run as long as 6 months.
- **Provide wrap-around services:** The state needs to include wrap-around services that help individuals who receive treatment for mental health and/or substance abuse and are looking to transition back into healthy living within the community. This can include finding sober living options, job training and outreach, and other resources that help equip individuals with the tools they need to stay healthy and productive within their community.

Invest in Local Police Through State Revenue Sharing:

As a former Mayor, Mark Begich believes communities see the greatest impact when they are partners in delivering services because they know their communities best. The loss of state revenue sharing has presented many communities with challenges in delivering local services. By restoring adequate municipal revenue sharing so local communities have the financial flexibility and necessary resources to designate funds to public safety programs, we could bolster local law enforcement capabilities while improving state and local coordination efforts.

Fully Staffing the Departments of Public Safety, Law, and Corrections:

If our departments are not properly staffed, they are unable to keep Alaskans safe. The state troopers currently have 40 funded, but unfilled positions. The Department of Corrections has 20 funded, but unfilled positions just in Seward alone and the Department of Law recently reported having more than 20 funded, but unfilled positions.

- **Modernize recruitment:** Our recruitment efforts must match the needs of our departments. The State must update outreach and recruitment efforts to ensure that we are engaging qualified applicants and providing comprehensive training that develops strong teams and maximizes opportunities for long-term success.
- **Ensure our compensation programs can compete across the country:** Our law enforcement compensation and benefit packages need to be commensurate to the Lower 48 and even to other agencies in the State. We should offer a defined benefit package like proposed last Legislative session and ensure wages are fair. We cannot continue to hire and invest in skilled employees just to see them leave the state for better opportunities.

Utilize Innovative Partnerships with Federal Prosecutors & Leverage State Resources:

Prosecuting crimes federally ensures maximum impact to crime on the street. We need to equip our federal prosecutors with the resources and tools they need to adequately charge criminals so offenders do not exploit the catch and release program and end up back on our streets.

- **Placing a State Prosecutor in Federal Prosecutor's office:** The State needs to maximize time and resources by placing an attorney in the Federal U.S Attorney's office – as Mark Begich did as Mayor of Anchorage - to ensure violent criminals receive the maximum sentences available. This relationship ensures charging decisions are made quickly and efficiently, keeps repeat offenders off the streets, and sends a message to criminals that they will be punished for their crimes.
- **Leveraging existing State resources:** As they continue to grow, we need to monitor the new Pretrial Enforcement Division (PED) to ensure they are adequately trained, staffed, and capable of monitoring those out on bail. Those charged with crimes cannot continue to be allowed on the streets if they cannot follow the rules. PED needs the tools necessary to track their clientele and be a visible presence in the criminal justice system.

Coordinate State and Local Government Efforts:

We need to better coordinate efforts between the State and local governments. Alaskans deserve a proven leader who will bring these groups together and move us towards our shared goal of a safer state. One where you know your car will be in your driveway each morning, and law enforcement officials are well trained and equipped with adequate resources to keep us safe.

- **Increasing Communication Between State-Run Programs and Local Law Enforcement:** Officers on the street currently don't have access to accurate up-to-date systems that can tell them if a person has bail conditions or a warrant. We need modern technology and systems that communicate with one and other to give police the tools they need to get the job done.
- **Maximizing State Resources by Engaging Local Law Enforcement on Key Issues like Drug Interdiction:** The State should partner with local jurisdictions and law enforcement where possible to work on drug interdiction, person crimes, and trafficking efforts. We have seen when local, state, and federal resources come together communities see the most impact and crime dissipates.

Bolster Public Safety in Rural Communities:

Crime is not only an issue in urban Alaska. Our rural communities need better coordination and support to keep their communities safe. I will work with local governments and tribal governments to determine better ways to deliver public safety services. We need better coordination between Village Police Officers, Village Public Safety Officers, and State of Alaska Public Safety Department to ensure that we have high-quality standards. We also need an Administration that will work with other state agencies and community organizations that can provide comprehensive services to help individuals in need of substance abuse services to help break the cycle of repeat offenders. As Governor, I would:

- **Ensure Village Police Officers and Village Public Safety Officers have training and workforce development resources to properly enforce laws:** In addition to providing adequate training and workforce development resources, we should include an exchange program as part of training that gives VPOs and VPSOs the opportunity to interact directly with local police officers and State Troopers.
- **Provide Adequate Wages and Benefits to Create Long-Term Career Opportunities:** We need these positions to be viewed as career opportunities and not just short-term jobs.
- **Develop Program with UAA to Grow our Own Public Safety Workforce:** The State should work with the University of Alaska to create a program that works directly with our young people and helps them become Village Police Officer and Village Public Safety Officers throughout Alaska.
- **Utilize Tribal Compacts to Empower Judicial Services Within Communities:** By utilizing compacts with the State of Alaska, the State can create more opportunities for tribal courts, community courts and Wellness Courts to be empowered when it comes to the delivery judicial services within our rural communities.