



CROATIAN AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

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Senator Mark Begich Receives the Croatian American Bar Association's 2013 Vinodol Code Award



The Croatian American Bar Association is pleased to announce that **Senator Mark Begich** is the recipient of the 2013 Vinodol Code Award in recognition of his distinguished public service career and vigilant attention to international matters affecting the worldwide Croatian community, as specifically exemplified by his insight on matters affecting economic and political progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and for his introduction of Senate Resolution 131 on May 8, 2013 in the Senate.

The comprehensive text of Senate Resolution 131 – after prolonged debate and ineffective action on Balkans progress in Washington and internationally – pointedly recommended that there be a Presidential Special Envoy designated for the Balkans to evaluate the successes and shortcomings of the implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to provide policy recommendations, and to report back to Congress.

The intentions of the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords were lofty, and certain success has been achieved because of the Accords' important contribution towards ending the Bosnian homeland war. However, a political stalemate has been reached in BiH that directly affects the economic benefit of BiH's three constitutive peoples and, potentially, the future political success of this new nation-state. In addition, the treatment and condition of Bosnian Croats has dramatically deteriorated over time and a domestic path forward in BiH for their political and economic

welfare is not easily seen in the midst of this ‘frozen conflict’. Senator Begich’s Resolution provided an impressively thorough outline of these problems and needed solutions for the persistent roadblocks in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Senator Mark Begich is in his sixth year representing the State of Alaska in the U.S. Senate, where his primary focus is building a strong Alaska economy.

He chairs two subcommittees – on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries and Coast Guard and on Emergency Management. He also serves on the Appropriations, Commerce, Homeland Security, Veterans and Indian Affairs committees. As chairman of the Senate Democratic Steering and Outreach Committee, Senator Begich holds the Number Five position in the leadership for the Senate majority.

Senator Begich was elected to the Senate in 2008 after serving as mayor of Anchorage, Alaska's largest city, for nearly six years. As mayor, he worked to capitalize on Anchorage's geographic proximity to Asia and Europe, meeting with scores of international leaders. As senator, he has traveled to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Croatia and Israel and has met with numerous international leaders including Croatian President Ivo Josipovic.

Senator Begich is of Croatian decent - his grandfather John Begic emigrated from the Croatian village of Podlapaca to the U.S. in 1911, eventually settling in Minnesota's Iron Range region. A businessman since age 14, Senator Begich was born and raised in Anchorage. He is married to businesswoman Deborah Bonito and they have an 11-year-old son, Jacob.

The Croatian American Bar Association is honored to present Senator Mark Begich with the 2013 Vinodol Code Award. We wish Senator Begich continued success in his public service career.



About the Croatian American Bar Association (CABA)

The CABA is an association of Croatian-American lawyers and Croatian lawyers from around the world. For more information, please visit www.CroatianAmericanBar.com. The CABA established the Vinodol Code Award to recognize persons of Croatian descent who have excelled in the practice of law and/or made an outstanding contribution to the law or legal scholarship. The award is named after the Vinodol Code (Vinodolski Zakon) written in 1288—the oldest legal text in Croatian and written in Glagolitic letters.