



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on November 8, 2010

Contractor on Tape, Promotes Murkowski to Workers

If it were not already clear by now, there is fresh evidence of why the members of Congress we elect forget, once they are in office, those principles of limited constitutional government they espoused on the way to Election Day. It can be found on the website of Joe Miller, the Palin-endorsed Tea Party candidate who won the Republican U.S. Senate nomination from Sen. Lisa Murkowski, who then launched an independent write-in campaign.



Miller and Murkowski finished well ahead of Democrat Scott McAdams, and Alaska election officials are still trying to determine the winner, counting write-in votes and absentee ballots that come in by dogsled from the usual places, as well as from God Knows Where, Alaska.

The video on the Joe Miller website (and also on YouTube and shown below) is of a Fox News interview with Miller. During the interview, the news channel showed a video of an unidentified contractor at an airport talking to some workers, obviously before the November 2 election, about how Lisa Murkowski is fortunate enough to be on the Senate Appropriations Committee.

{youtube width="480" height="385"}5H-VzKl7my0{/youtube}

The unidentified man in the hardhat, seen in the video talking to other hardhats, had a simple message: Murkowski has an "in" on the Appropriations Committee. Neither Joe Miller nor Scott McAdams would likely land on that committee as freshman senators. Lisa Murkowski could keep the funds flowing aboard the gravy train to Alaska. All sorts of infrastructure improvements, all sorts of money for roads, bridges, pipelines, buses, trains, airports, you name it were at stake. Not that he was trying to pressure the workers to vote for Murkowski, mind you. It was just a little information session. Vote your pocketbook and give your conscience the day off. Vote well and prosper.

The gentleman in the video, so far as I know, did nothing wrong. Unless he was politicking on the government's time and dime, he broke no law. It is all too indirect. He was talking about getting federal money, but he did not have the federal funds to offer the workers to bribe them to vote a certain way. He was just explaining how the system works — for the benefit of some at the expense of others.

Who does not remember the ruckus that was raised over the "bridge to nowhere" in Alaska? More than \$200 million went to build a bridge out to some island where hardly anyone lived. Everyone, it seemed was either outraged or embarrassed over such an appropriation clearing not only the committees but gaining the approval of both houses of Congress. Every member of Congress outside the state of Alaska either was or pretended to be opposed to that kind of waste. Yet when Sen. Tom Coburn of Oklahoma introduced legislation to take away part of that funding and use the money to help rebuild



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infrastructure in Katrina-damaged Louisiana, he got exactly 15 sponsors. At that time, Republicans still controlled the Senate. So there were more than 50 of them. When I went to school, 15 was one third of 45 and a good deal less than a one-third of 51. But these Senators, Republicans as well as Democrats, wanted their own projects to be guided safely through the Appropriations Committee, which was chaired at the time by the late Ted Stevens, the corruption-ridden Alaskan senator who used his powerful position to dispense favors to his fellow Alaskans. So they kept their mouths shut and sat on their hands when Coburn offered his amendment. And they reminded us why *Profiles in Courage* is a slender volume.

Sen. Stevens was narrowly defeated for reelection in 2008, but he was in office for a long time and he helped build a culture of self-serving legislation. But it did not begin with, and clearly did not end with, Ted Stevens. Let us not forget it was his fellow Republicans who elevated that prince of pork and emperor of earmarks to the chairmanship of Appropriations. Let's see if the new Congress, with a Republican House and a heavy Republican minority in the Senate, does things any differently.

Thumbnail photo: screen-grab of contractor from video



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