

Mike Gravel - Democrat

Mike Gravel was born May 13, 1930 in Springfield, Massachusetts. Although he came from a working-class neighborhood, he was able to attend Assumption College Preparatory School, and put in one year at American International College in Springfield, Massachusetts, before leaving in 1951 to enlist in the U.S. Army. There, he served as a Special Adjutant in the Communication and Intelligent Services, then as a Special Agent in the Counter Intelligence Corps. he advanced to First Lieutenant in 1954. After his Army career, he attended Columbia University in New York City, where he studied economics and received a Bachelor of Science in 1956.

Turning at this point to his dreams of far-away places and adventure, he moved to Alaska. there he worked a series of odd jobs until eventually running for the Alaska House of Representatives in 1962. He won this election, and started his political career as the representative for Anchorage. He carried on here for two terms from 1962 to 1966, serving as Speaker of the House during this time. He declined re-election to this post in favor of running for the U.S. Senate, a post he successfully won in 1968 to become the Senator from Alaska.

As a Senator, he chaired the Energy, Water Resources, and Environmental Pollution subcommittees, and served on the Environment and Public Works Committee as well as the Finance and Interior Committees. Throughout his term, he was known to oppose nuclear testing and policies in favor of atomic energy.

In 1971, Mike Gravel played a pivotal role in getting the famous Pentagon Papers released. These details of the Vietnam war and U.S. policy concerning same were released to public scrutiny largely under his stewardship. He also crusaded against the legislation renewing the military draft during the Nixon administration. In 1973, he was again the driving force behind the construction of the Alaska pipeline, currently providing 20% of United States oil.

Over the years he also oversaw much legislation that had to do with the health and well-being of his adopted state of Alaska. One of these maneuvers was the defeat of a bill that would essentially have sold most of Alaska's uninhabited land to the Federal government. In blocking the passage of this bill, he would earn an enemy in Senator Ted Stevens - the same Senator made famous when he dismissed the Internet as a "series of tubes clogged with information". A later bill to take over Alaska while reserving a paltry few acres for National parks went through, over Mike Gravel's protests.

In 1972, he made a brief run for Vice President in the Democrat party, and while garnering a sizable amount of support failed to get the nomination. He then won

re-election to the Senate in 1974 for a large percentage, but lost re-election in 1980 and had to leave political office. Discouraged from this defeat, he temporarily left politics for nearly nine years while he practiced business in the private sector. In 1989, he formed the Direct Democracy Foundation - an organization to advocate the shutting down of big government and transferring more control to the individual citizen. He has continued to spearhead the campaign to revolutionize United States political fixtures, with some modest cheers from his supporters.

He announced his candidacy for United States President in April, 2006. Taking advantage of his seniority and experience in working his way up in government, he has encouraged voters to think of him as "grandpa Mike".

Mike Gravel is seen mainly as a hard-left Independent party member occupying the fringes of the Democratic Liberal party. His continued stumping for Direct Democracy has put out a call to radically overhaul the United States government. He has argued for the increase of liberty in many dimensions, such as abolishing drug laws, eliminating tax loopholes for the rich, being pro-choice, regulating big corporations, abolition of the ban on gay marriage, creating a direct citizen-controlled non-profit health care system, and many more radical - but refreshing - proposals.

Mike Gravel appeals mainly to the Liberal-Democrat who borders on the Populist belief system. He is indeed very "old-school" Democrat, and through his working-class background is able to connect well with the low and middle class voter, especially any minority group.

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