

OPINION

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Reflections on Ted Kennedy



A legacy for Generations

Senator Ted Kennedy was one of our nation's greatest and most honorable leaders, paving the way for equal rights, access to health care and bringing more opportunity to Americans of all walks of life.

His passionate commitment to creating a safer and more just nation and world for all of us today and into the future will be missed but never forgotten.

Senator Kennedy's legacy will live on for generations and serves as a model for all of us in public and private service to emulate. In his own words 'the hope still lives and the dream shall never die.'

--Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski.



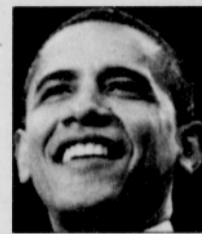
Ted Kennedy (1932-2009)

Our Most Accomplished American

Senator Edward M. Kennedy was not only one of the greatest senators of our time, but one of the most accomplished Americans ever to serve our democracy.

Over the past half-century, nearly every major piece of legislation that has advanced the civil rights, health, and economic well-being of the American people bore his name and resulted from his efforts. With his passing, an important chapter in our American story has come to an end.

--President Barack Obama



Unfinished Work

The nation and our union's members have lost a great leader who gave voice as the workers' champion with a legacy that benefited social and economic justice for all.

Senator Kennedy fought for us through nearly five decades and authored more than 2,500 bills -- beginning in the sixties for civil and voter rights, and ending with his last vote on President Obama's economic recovery plan. He never wavered in his support of working families and left his imprint on every major piece of social legislation to pass Congress during his years in the Senate.

Today jobless workers have access to COBRA, entry-level workers get an improved minimum wage, millions of children have access to healthcare, the family medical leave act, and pension security are among his legislative achievements.

But his work is unfinished for the Employee Free Choice Act and the Affordable Health Choices Act -- bills he introduced in the current Congress.

We need to fulfill Senator Kennedy's quest to make America a better place and commit ourselves to winning healthcare for all and congressional passage of legislation that secures the path of worker rights to a union.

--Leo W. Gerard, International President of the United Steelworkers



Always on Our Side

With the passing of Senator Edward M. Kennedy, our nation lost an extraordinary champion of equal justice. His leadership on civil rights issues during nearly five decades of service in the U. S. Senate is unprecedented and incomparable.

Beginning his Senate career at the dawn of the civil rights movement, he was at the helm during passage of all of the important federal civil rights laws--laws ensuring full participation in the political process, opportunity in employment, access to public accommodations, fairness in housing and equal opportunity in education.

In subsequent years, he worked to strengthen these laws and to pass new laws protecting victims of injustice. Without his unyielding voice, the nation would be a very different place. Indeed, the historic election of our current president would not have been possible without these earlier milestones.

Senator Kennedy possessed a rare combination of qualities that allowed him to carry the torch on civil rights in the U.S. Senate. He had an unwavering commitment to ensuring equal opportunity, the courage to fight the hard battles, the optimism to lead others, and the perseverance and statesmanship that ensured victory after victory.

Above all, what we will remember is his fearlessness. When doubt or cynicism or the prospect of defeat was injected into the debate, Senator Kennedy inspired us to continue the struggle for a fairer and more just society. In addition to inspiring us, it was Senator Kennedy who often crafted the legislative plan leading to success in that struggle.

Simply put, Senator Kennedy was always on our side, and, on many occasions, this made the difference to the cause for justice.

--NAACP Legal Defense Fund

Kennedy's Legacy will Endure

There was no one else like Senator Kennedy, and there never will be.

The causes he championed during almost half of a century of public service are strong proof that he kept the interests of the most vulnerable Americans in his heart and in his mind, and he applied his pen to these causes, authoring and helping to pass some of our nation's most important pieces of legislation.

He got right to work upon entering the Senate in the early 1960s and was instrumental in the passage of the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, and the Fair Housing Act -- landmark laws that gave minorities a platform on which they could not only stand but from which they could hold their heads high and assert their political strength.

Later in his career he helped establish the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, wrote the Americans with



Disabilities Act and the bill to create the State Children's Health Insurance Program, and pushed legislation to raise the federal minimum wage.

He was proud to champion liberal policies and passionate about the issues but always willing to listen to others respectfully and willing to negotiate to find common ground when needed.

My life was enriched by knowing and working with the 'Lion of the Senate'. Though deeply upset by his loss, I am comforted in part by knowing that his legacy will endure, and I will join with fellow progressives in carrying on his work, particularly fulfilling 'the cause of his lifetime' by passing meaningful health care reform.

--U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif.

Dream for Equality Shall Never Die

ACORN knew no truer friend in Congress than Senator Kennedy. Over the years we have worked side by side to better the lives of low- and moderate-income Americans.

Teddy, as many of our members call him, was a frequent participant in various events where ACORN members would come from Massachusetts and beyond to make their voice heard in Washington.

The great influence Senator Kennedy has had on our lives and the way he changed the course of American history cannot be overstated. He was a true advocate for immigration reform, living wages, civil rights, labor, fair housing, and, of course, what he considered the 'cause of his life,'

healthcare reform.

At this critical juncture in our national journey we can learn from Senator Kennedy's example, from his passion and perseverance.

The sadness we feel today is deep, and will not soon subside. But ACORN members take heart in the fact that we remain so deeply committed to those causes Senator Kennedy found so important.

We vow to continue on in his name. As he said, 'the work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives, and the dream shall never die.'

--Maude Hurd, ACORN National President

His Work Made the Country Better

I first saw Senator Kennedy in action when he spoke to Senate interns in 1976. It was a standing-room-only crowd. I was tremendously impressed by his principled fight for working Americans, his booming voice, and his passion. His informal title as 'Lion of the Senate' was well-earned.

He has been the force behind so many advances in areas ranging from health care and education to civil rights and the judiciary, including landmark legislation such as Medicare, Head Start and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Even as he fought the illness that would ultimately take him from us, he continued to push for health care reform that would

provide every American with quality, affordable health care. In a life marked by so many personal tragedies, he never gave up on the battle to make our nation a fairer and better place for Americans.

Senator Kennedy dedicated himself to the most American of values: that every person deserves an equal opportunity to pursue his or her God-given talents.

The nation has lost a giant. Senator Kennedy made the Senate a better place, he made the country a better place, and I cannot express how honored I am to have had a brief chance to serve with him.

--U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore.

Will Forever be Grateful

Our nation has lost a steadfast champion for equality, fairness and social justice. The Latino community will forever be grateful for Senator Kennedy's work to strengthen our education system, as well as his fight to end discrimination and efforts to reform our immigration system.

Throughout his life, he worked tirelessly for the betterment of all people and left an indelible mark on many laws that are critically important to Hispanics. Senator Kennedy's legacy will not be forgotten and we should all honor him by continuing to advance the causes he held dear.

--Rep. Nydia M. Velázquez, Chairwoman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus



A Civil Rights Giant

Senator Kennedy was a true friend to the NAACP and the causes of civil rights throughout his entire career.

Civil Rights, human rights and health care, among others, were issues that were far from just political for Senator Kennedy, they were personal. He was always so passionate and inspiring on the floor of the Senate, at forums and in his every-day dealings with the NAACP that everyone he came in contact with would walk away with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment to issues of human dignity and justice.

The entire NAACP family is deeply saddened by this loss. Senator Kennedy was a political strategist like no other and not only have we lost an ally, but we have lost one of the giants in the Civil Rights movement.

--Hilary O. Shelton, NAACP senior vice president

Chiropractic Auto Injury Clinic, PC

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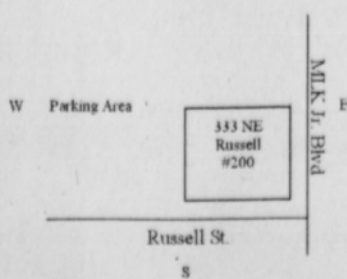
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Letter to the Editor

In response to the story on streetcars expanding ("Cutting Edge Displacement," Portland Observer, Aug. 19), we hope that the City of Portland and Portland Streetcar, Inc. doesn't share the point of view expressed by Christopher B. Leinberger, the visiting fellow with the Brookings Institution who was quoted in the article.

Leinberger's opinion that Portland "has a very straightforward set of options when it comes to streetcar expansion: accept displacement or 'stay poor,'" sets up a false paradigm and pits public interests against each other.

While it is true that developments such as the eastside streetcar line can cause displacement, it is also true that projects can potentially benefit the long time residents of a traditionally disadvantaged neighborhood. Of course for long term

Making Streetcars Work

residents to benefit, they have to be able to afford to stay in the neighborhood.

Reporter Jake Thomas points out that there are currently few concrete plans for addressing a probable loss of affordable housing that will result from streetcar expansion. It is this lack of planning that is the problem, not the streetcar itself. It is not a foregone conclusion that to have the benefits of the streetcar we must also accept gentrification, displacement of local small businesses and other ills.

When we match affordable housing with reliable public transit, it is a powerful tool to create opportunity for those who have traditionally been left behind.

--Michael Anderson, executive director, Oregon Opportunity Network