

Senator Kennedy

Ted Kennedy was the master legislator and master politician. In each profession only a few rise to the level of such genius. During his tenure in the United States Senate Mr. Kennedy introduced 2,500 bills and saw more than 550 of them enacted into law. But that is not a full measure of his contribution to our nation. His contributions must be measured by quality as well as quantity. When measured by those standards he has no equal in modern times.

The legacy of Ted Kennedy flows directly from his vision for America. Ted Kennedy saw both the greatness of America and its inequities and injustices. He was determined to mend the inequities and injustices and strengthen greatness where ever he found it. It is hard to name a piece of legislation dealing with civil rights, human rights or economic justice that was not guided or shaped by Ted Kennedy at some point in its path through the Congress.

No issue reflects his resolve more than providing for the health of our people. From his very first days as a legislator he declared his lifelong dedication to the cause of ensuring quality, accessible health care for all. He was a tireless supporter of community health centers as a means of delivering quality, accessible and culturally appropriate health services. Community health centers have dramatically changed the way inner city and rural America receives health care.

Kennedy was a believer in evidence based medicine. He had an lengthy and open ended list of diseases for which he supported medical research. He was a pioneer in protecting medical records through HIPA, the Health Information Privacy Act. And he had a special concern for pregnant women and children taking special satisfaction in the recent expansion of children's health care.

The vision of Ted Kennedy illuminated a path for us all. To his staff and his myriad of friends and admirers he was a constant source of inspiration. I can think of no greater tribute to this giant of a legislator than to continue along the path toward social and economic justice he helped to map.