

Statement of Christine L. Owens
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on the Death of Senator Edward M. Kennedy
August 26, 009

America's working families have lost the champion of a lifetime with the passing of Senator Edward M. Kennedy. Throughout his nearly half-century in the Senate, Ted Kennedy was an unequalled leader in campaigns for every significant reform aiming to improve living standards, expand employment and economic opportunities, shore up family economic security, and strengthen workers' rights. In countless battles to raise the minimum wage; enact basic civil rights laws and then expand protections to cover all workers; update and improve unemployment insurance and related programs; build a more effective workforce development system; provide family leave and paid sick leave; fix our broken immigration laws; restore the right of workers to form unions; and provide health care coverage to everyone in America, this lion of the Senate roared relentlessly for America's workers, and loudest and longest for those whose means and access to power are most limited.

As he ended his remarks at the Democratic National Convention one year ago today, Senator Kennedy reminded us eloquently and passionately that "the work begins anew, the hope rises again, and the dream lives on." Even as we mourn the passing of this great man, Senator Kennedy's courage in the face of every setback, his doggedness in fighting for every worker and his unshakeable commitment to making America a land of opportunity for all encourage and inspire us.

It is hard to imagine a world without Senator Ted Kennedy, or a battle for workers that he does not command. But the greatest tribute we can pay to this remarkable man is to continue the fight, and so in his spirit, in his memory and in his honor, we will do so.

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