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**KENNEDY JOINS MASSACHUSETTS LEADERSHIP IN PROVIDING HEALTH CARE
FOR ALL IN MASSACHUSETTS**

Historic health care bill is first in the nation to provide quality, affordable care to all

Boston, MA—Today, Senator Edward M. Kennedy joined Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, Senate President Robert Travaglini and House Speaker Salvatore DiMasi in the historic signing of a health care bill that will provide universal coverage for all Massachusetts residents.

Senator Kennedy said, “We take pride that Massachusetts has long been renowned for its extraordinary pre-eminence in medical care and medical research. We have been the gold standard in those fields for many years. This is a moment to savor of hope and promise and achievement for all the people of our Commonwealth, and perhaps for the rest of America too, and we intend to make the most of it.”

The bill, a culmination of bipartisan efforts over the past several years, provides access to quality, affordable health care coverage to Massachusetts families, while placing responsibility on businesses, the Commonwealth and individuals to purchase health insurance. In order to help those who do not qualify for Medicaid, but are unable to purchase private plans, the state will help subsidize the purchase of private health care plans.

Senator Kennedy has also worked over the past several years to secure federal dollars for the Medicaid waiver, which constitutes \$385 million for those in the free care pool. In years past, the pool paid for medical treatment for the uninsured. Kennedy has vowed to shepherd the bill through the federal process to ensure Massachusetts continues to receive funding for the waiver and so that Massachusetts’ health care bill will be a reality.

During the course of Senator Kennedy’s 43 years in the United States Senate, he has fought for universal health care for all Americans. This Congress, Senator Kennedy has introduced a bill, “Medicare for All” that seeks to provide all Americans inclusion into the highly successful Medicare system, opening its doors to children and adults and allowing the government to negotiate prescription drug prices in an attempt to drive down costs to Americans and profits for the drug companies.

Senator Kennedy’s remarks today at Faneuil Hall are below.

**STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY
ON THE SIGNING OF THE MASSACHUSETTS HEALTH REFORM LEGISLATION
April 12, 2006
Boston, Massachusetts**

Governor Romney, President Travaglini, Speaker DiMasi, assembled leaders and friends.

You've given Massachusetts just what the doctor ordered.

With the signing of this landmark health reform bill, after so many years of false starts, our actions have finally matched our words and we have lived up to our ideals.

At long last, the impossible dream of health care for all will finally become a reality in our Commonwealth, and quality care will truly be available and affordable for each and every man, woman, and child in our state.

We take pride that Massachusetts has long been renowned for its extraordinary pre-eminence in medical care and medical research. We have been the gold standard in those fields for many years. But to our shame, we have tolerated a double standard as well, in which millions of our fellow citizens have suffered needlessly, because the miracles of modern medicine were out of reach for all but the few.

As with any great undertaking, our ascent to this landmark day has had its stresses and strains. Our climb has involved true sacrifice, hard work, and artful compromise.

Now, yet again, the pioneering spirit of the people of Massachusetts has prevailed. The ideals of the American revolution are still alive and well here. Those great ideals have taught us never to give up and never to give in.

It is appropriate that we observe this auspicious occasion in Faneuil Hall, the Cradle of Liberty. The negotiations over this health reform have been intense, and the passion of the debates across the state have sometimes seemed a reminder of the oratory that once shook the ancient timbers of this edifice.

To our Governor, our Senate President and our Speaker, we say, "Well done." You laid the cornerstone of our bipartisan progress on this new law from its earliest days. You led the way over the long and winding path to this moment. And now you may well have fired the shot heard round the world on health care in America. I hope so.

Many others had major roles in shaping this reform as well. Our State Senators and Representatives. Our business leaders. Our religious leaders. Our hospitals and our health centers. And most of all, the people of Massachusetts, who reminded us why we still call ourselves a "Common Wealth," with a solemn responsibility to act for the common good.

We know that this day is only a beginning, but what a new beginning it is. There is still much to be done to fulfill the promise of this new law in the daily lives of our people. There are regulations to be written, federal approval to be sought, adjustments to be made in good faith as the new law takes effect. I join in a solemn pledge to continue our progress in the days, months and years ahead.

Looking back from the future, may it be said that of this day, that something good and lasting happened here – for parents and children, for merchants and workers, from the Berkshires to Boston. This is a moment to savor of hope and promise and achievement for all the people of our Commonwealth, and perhaps for the rest of America too, and we intend to make the most of it.

Thank you very much.