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STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY ON THE AFFORDABLE HEALTH CHOICES ACT

HYANNIS PORT — Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today released the following statement regarding the *Affordable Health Choices Act*:

“This room is a special place. In this room, my two brothers declared their candidacy for the presidency. Today, the nation takes another major step toward reaching the goals to which they dedicated their careers, and for which they gave their lives. They strived, as I have tried to do, for a fairer and more just America – a nation where every American could share fully in the promise of quality health care.

As you vote today, know that I am with you in heart and mind and soul, and I wish very much that I could be with you in person.

I could not be prouder of our committee. We have done the hard work that the American people sent us here to do. We have considered hundreds of proposals. Where we have been able to reach principled compromise, we have done so. Where we have not been able to resolve our differences, we have treated those with whom we disagree with respect and patience. I thank all the members of our committee – Republicans, Democrats and Independents alike – for their dedication and devotion to the great cause of quality, affordable health care for all our people.

Extraordinary thanks go to Chris Dodd. No man has ever had a truer or more generous friend than he has been to me, and no cause has ever had a more able leader than he has been in the great effort to enact health reform.

It is a cause that knows no boundary of party, region, or philosophy. It is a cause that can and should unite us all as Americans. We know, however, that our work is not over – far from it. As we move from our committee room to the Senate floor, we must continue the search for solutions that unite us, so that the great promise of quality affordable health care for all can be fulfilled.

As I said, this room is a special place – and I believe our committee’s actions have added a glorious chapter to the honor roll of history that has been made here.

Americans are an extraordinary people. We have created a nation of liberty and justice. We have defeated forces of oppression, and we have spread prosperity and progress across the globe. When the American people are on the march, there is no barrier that can resist them, no obstacle that can block their path.

The American people are on the march once more, and they will not stop until quality, affordable health care is the birthright of every American. And we are with them every step of the way.”

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