

crude oil and other commodities. The CFTC must be fully equipped and staffed so it can prevent the excessive speculation that drove oil prices to record highs last year and really hurt energy consumers. This funding is an important investment that will help us rebuild our economy on a stronger foundation.

In addition to these good programs, this bill also includes funding for a number of important Nevada projects. We have funding for the Nevada Arid Rangelands Initiative, Mormon cricket control, and noxious weed control. We have assistance for the Wildfire Support Group in Orovada to help them do fuels management. And we have funding for the University of Nevada Reno for their work with the Food and Agriculture Policy Research Institute, which does great research to help us understand what is going on in American agriculture so we can create good programs to help our farmers.

This bill makes a number of important investments. So I am very pleased that this bill has passed the Senate with broad support—76 Senators voting to send this conference report to the President.

#### 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today I wish to commemorate and celebrate the 50th anniversary of the St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church.

For more than a century, a proud and vibrant Greek community has thrived in Nevada. 50 years ago, the parish of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church was established in Las Vegas, NV, to serve this dynamic community.

For half of a century, the parishioners at St. John the Baptist have celebrated their Hellenic heritage through cultural and spiritual events, all while giving back to the Las Vegas community through service. As one example of the many ways parishioners have inspired southern Nevada, the Panagia chapter of the Ladies Philoptochos Society meets monthly to serve the parish and the community by working in a hands-on fashion to serve the liturgical, charitable, educational, youth, and crisis needs of the community.

Las Vegas is profoundly enriched by the St. John the Baptist Greek Church. Every year, the church holds a Greek Festival, where Nevadans of all backgrounds listen to Greek music, eat Greek food, and embrace the spirit of kefi—a passion for life that radiates from the parishioners at St. John the Baptist.

It is my honor to celebrate the “Golden Heritage” of this storied church on Friday, October 16, 2009. To my friends at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church: OPA! May you celebrate many more successful years.

#### REMEMBERING SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, with the passing of Senator Teddy Kennedy, Americans lost a champion, the Senate lost a living legend, and those of us who were fortunate to know him personally lost a friend and mentor.

My memories of Teddy Kennedy reach beyond our short time together in the Senate all the way back to my days as a kid when his brother Jack was running for President of the United States. My father was an early supporter of Jack’s campaign and Teddy stayed at our house in Arizona while he was campaigning for his brother in the west. In those days, the west was not considered a plum campaign assignment so, naturally, as the youngest of his clan it fell to him. We had a full house at the time, with all of my brothers and sisters at home, so there wasn’t even a bed for him to sleep on. So he slept on the floor and never uttered a word of complaint. My memories of him from that time reflect the same Teddy Kennedy everyone describes today. He was a kind man, dedicated to his brother and his family, and always patient with all of us kids and our questions.

In later years, Teddy continued to be a frequent visitor to New Mexico. When our family was in the midst of a campaign and needed that extra bit of star power, Teddy was there the one person who could ignite a crowd like no other. As Democrats, we loved having him in our State because he could always get a turnout. He had rallies with 10,000–12,000 people—huge crowds for New Mexico.

Teddy Kennedy loved New Mexico and New Mexicans. And New Mexicans loved Teddy right back. In most family living rooms, you can find two prominently displayed photographs. They include at least one of the Kennedys be it Jack, Bobby, or Teddy and at least one of the Pope. New Mexicans just have a very deep affection for the entire Kennedy family.

My father eventually served in Jack Kennedy’s Cabinet as Interior Secretary. These days, he talks a lot about his time in JFK’s administration. He says he is now the last of the generation. The last leaf on the tree from the Kennedy Cabinet. My father was greatly saddened by Senator Kennedy’s passing.

Just about every piece of monumental legislation that has come out of this Senate over the past 50 years has had Teddy Kennedy’s stamp on it somehow. Whether it was voting rights or education improvements or health care reform—the cause of Teddy’s life—America owes a debt of gratitude to the senior senator from Massachusetts for his leadership and unwavering dedication to making our country a better place for all who call it home.

But the last chapter in Teddy’s legacy remains incomplete. That chapter is health care reform, and it is our job

as Teddy’s colleagues and friends to pick up where he left off and pass legislation that helps all Americans obtain affordable, quality health coverage. Teddy Kennedy dreamed of a day when decent, quality health care is a fundamental right and not just a privilege. We are once again at the edge of transformative change in our country. We have Teddy Kennedy to thank for getting us to this point. I look forward to joining my colleagues as we make Teddy’s final dream a reality.

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I rise to speak of the enormous contributions to this body and to our nation of our former colleague, the late senior Senator from Massachusetts, Ted Kennedy.

When I took the oath as a U.S. Senator on January 3, 2009, I have to confess to a fair amount of trepidation. Many great statesmen have served before me in this esteemed body. For a former mayor from a State so distant from Washington, DC, taking a seat among these American leaders was a little intimidating.

No sitting Senator was a larger giant than Ted Kennedy and he impacted my life long before I arrived here. As a boy born and raised in Anchorage, my parents spoke of the great pride in public service the Kennedy family inspired in our family and in our Nation. My father, the late Nick Begich, served for 2 years in the Congress with Senator Kennedy, before my dad’s death in 1972.

In many ways, Alaska and Massachusetts can’t be further apart. Alaska is just celebrating its 50th year of admission to the United States and is a vast land rich in natural resources and of conservative, independent-minded people. The Bay State was the site of one of America’s first settlements more than four centuries ago, is well developed, and its residents decidedly more liberal.

Yet in the first week of April 1968, those differences faded when Senator Kennedy traveled to Sitka to deliver a speech to the Alaska Democratic State Convention. The days-old assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. still ached in the hearts of Americans. In a scratchy tape recording of his speech, Senator Kennedy calls on Americans to rise above the frustration and fury they felt and to rededicate ourselves to “wipe away cynicism and to introduce the understanding that we wish to see future generations exercise so they will not suffer as their mothers and fathers have suffered.”

The transcript of that speech shows that Alaska U.S. Senator Ernest Gruening and the gathered Alaskans rose to a standing ovation as Senator Kennedy concluded his inspirational remarks. Today, 41 years later, those words continue to serve as an inspiration to me.

Mr. President, I had the opportunity to meet Senator Kennedy only once, when he welcomed me as a Member of this body just a few months ago. The intimidation I felt as a new Senator melted in his warmth and graciousness.