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Statement on the Decision of Representative Joseph P. Kennedy II Not To Seek Reelection

March 13, 1998

For 12 years in the United States House of Representatives, Joe Kennedy has proven himself to be a dedicated advocate for the Nation's working families. His efforts on behalf of his Massachusetts constituents, as well as underprivileged people across America, will be sorely missed in Washington. As one of the foremost voices in the Congress for low income housing opportunities for needy families, Representative Kennedy worked to expand the availability of credit to working Americans to buy homes and to open businesses.

I know that Representative Kennedy will continue his family's long tradition of public service on behalf of our Nation. I wish him well in all of his future endeavors, and on behalf of the Nation I thank him for his dedicated service.

The President's Radio Address

March 14, 1998

Good morning. This is a time of great promise for America, and it should be a time of great achievement as we work to strengthen our Nation for the 21st century.

There are only 68 work days remaining in the congressional session. Yet, we still have a lot of work to do: maintaining fiscal discipline by setting aside any budget surplus until we save Social Security first, protecting our children with comprehensive tobacco legislation, strengthening families with the Patients' Bill of Rights and child care legislation, honoring our parents by letting more people buy into Medicare, improving education with higher standards and smaller classes and more funds to build and repair schools, preserving our environment with a new clean water initiative and incentives to have new technologies meet the challenge of global warming.

This is a full agenda for the future of our Nation. But we must act now—not over the next 68 days but right now, in the next several days—to advance our security around the world and rebuild communities hit by natural disasters here at home.

I have asked Congress for an emergency bill to fund these pressing security and natural disaster needs. Here's what's at stake. The measure will pay for the deployment of America's Armed Forces in and around the Persian Gulf. Our Armed Forces must stand watch to make sure Saddam Hussein allows inspectors to detect and destroy his capacity for nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. As long as Saddam Hussein continues to pose a threat, we must remain vigilant.

The measure would also pay our longstanding debt to the United Nations at a time when that organization continues to play a critical role in forcing Iraq to yield and in supporting peace and progress throughout the world. I don't think any American believes that America shouldn't pay its dues to the U.N.

The emergency measure will also support the brave men and women of our Armed Forces as they continue to help democracy and peace take root in Bosnia. It will promote our national economic security as well, supporting the International Monetary Fund as it reduces the harm to America's economy from the financial turmoil in Asia.

Perhaps most important of all, we need emergency action to help millions of families whose lives have been turned upside down by the natural disasters in the winter of 1998. Communities in California, New England, Florida, and Guam have seen flooding, ice, mudslides, and the savage force of El Nino. I visited with many of these families; I've seen how hard they're struggling. Our national community must help them. This emergency measure will rebuild roads, repair military bases, prevent future flooding, help family farmers, and help families in distress.