

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 29, 2007

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**KENNEDY: KATRINA SHOWED HOW LONG A JOURNEY WE STILL HAVE TO MAKE TO
LIVE UP TO AMERICA'S PROMISE**

MORE OF OUR NATION'S CHILDREN NEED A HEALTHY START IN LIFE — NOT FEWER

Washington, DC: Today, on the second anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and the author of the Children's Health Insurance Program, urged the President to support Congress's efforts to cover more children. Yesterday the Census Report revealed that number of uninsured has skyrocketed from 44.8 million in 2005 to 47 million in 2006. Over 600,000 more children are now uninsured than were in 2005, with an increase from 8 million to 8.7 million in just one year. The poverty rate declined by .3% in 2006 and little changed in the total number of Americans living in poverty. Senator Kennedy issued the following statement:

"The violent winds and flood of Katrina tore away the mask that has long concealed the silent slavery of poverty in so much of our society. Katrina showed how long a journey we still have to make to live up to America's promise. Sadly, just yesterday we learned from the latest census statistics that more and more families are not moving forward on that journey, but staying behind in poverty and struggling with the health care that they need but can't afford. Health care costs are skyrocketing, yet the number of Americans who can't count on having a family doctor continues to grow. As President tours the Gulf Coast today, I hope he comes to the right conclusion that more of our nation's children need a healthy start in life — not fewer.

The disaster of reminds us, we're all part of a family -- and we have a responsibility to help members of our family in need. Government must respond in ways that are as good and as compassionate as the American people. We know what must be done. We're a stronger country when we're a fairer country. Inequality and injustice undermine our economy, our security, our standing in the world, our future."

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