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STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY ON WORLD AIDS DAY

Washington, D.C.— Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, released the following statement today in recognition of World AIDS Day.

“AIDS is the worst epidemic of our time. 33 million people- men, women and children on every continent- are infected with HIV worldwide, and the disease causes 2 million deaths every year. Experts predict that in the next quarter century, AIDS will become the third leading cause of death worldwide, after heart disease and stroke. It’s a global problem that requires a global solution.

In the past decade, we’ve have made significant progress here at home in both the prevention and treatment of the disease. We’ve nearly doubled the life expectancy of people living with the virus, and Congress successfully reauthorized legislation— the Ryan White Care Act— that provides lifesaving drugs and other health care and support to people living with diseases.

Obviously, there is still much to be done. Globally, teens and young adults, particularly girls and young women, continue to be at the center of the epidemic, and it’s had a severe impact on the hardest hit nations, undermining whole communities and reducing their development and economic growth.

Our country is blessed with extraordinary resources, both human and financial, and we have a moral obligation to help those in other lands who suffer so much from the disease. By working with other countries we can provide affordable protection and treatment to victims, no matter where they live. The challenge is great, but our ability to work together for the common good is greater. On World AIDS Day, it’s important for each of us to recommit ourselves to working together to defeat this devastating epidemic.”

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