

# **Senator Edward M. Kennedy Oral History Project**

## **Briefing Materials**

**Donald W. Riegle, Jr.**

**Prepared by Bryan Craig, Research Assistant**  
July 2008

## DON RIEGLE FACT SHEET

*Prepared by Rob Martin and Bryan Craig*

*Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, 7/1/2008*

---

Don Riegle (R/D-MI)

\*switches party affiliation from Republican to Democrat in 1973

### Years of Service:

House: 1967-1976

Senate: 1976-1995

### *Committees with EMK:*

- Labor & Human Resources, 1977-1984 (*leaves before EMK becomes chairman in 1987*)

### *Other Senate committees:*

- Finance Committee (1987-1995). Chairman of the Finance Committee's Subcommittee on Health for Families and the Uninsured (1988/1989-1995)
- Senate Budget Committee. Chairman (1989-1995)
- Commerce Committee (1977-1989)
- Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs (1977-1995). Chairman (1989-1995)

### *Key health care issues Riegle worked on with EMK:*

- Health care. EMK and Riegle co-sponsored bills in 1985 that covered statewide insurance pools and Medicare, and another statewide insurance pool bill in 1986
- 1989 *Bi-Committee Bi-Partisan Senate Working Group on Universal Access*. Riegle and EMK created a working group with other Senators on health care reform, but it fell apart in 1991
- 1991 Health America "Play or Pay" bill. EMK, Mitchell, Riegle and Rockefeller formed a Democratic leadership group to present a new comprehensive health care reform plan
- 1994 Clinton health care plan: Mitchell reportedly drew from legislation put forward by EMK on Labor and Riegle on Finance in preparing his compromise bill

### *Key labor issues while on Labor Committee with EMK (1977-1984):*

- 1977 minimum wage increase from \$2.30/hr. to \$3.35/hr. for all workers by 1981
- 1978/1979 subsidies for heating and cooling costs for low-income people
- 1978/1981/1984 Older Americans Act extensions (EMK's Meals on Wheels)
- 1981/1982 EMK-Quayle job training bill. Riegle sat on the Subcommittee on Employment and Productivity that voted for the bill, and he voted for it in full committee

### *Issues that came up during this time with EMK:*

- 1983/1985 immigration reform. Riegle and EMK led the opposition on the Senate floor against two immigration measures
- 1991 Gulf War. Riegle and EMK vote against the use of force
- 1994 Senate Finance Committee's health care reform bill

## **DON RIEGLE, JR. TIMELINE**

*Prepared by Bryan Craig*

*Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, 07/01/2008*

---

### **1962**

*November* Edward M. Kennedy (EMK) is elected to the U.S. Senate.

### **1966**

*November* Riegle is elected to the U.S. House of Representatives as a Republican from Michigan where he serves until 1976.

### **1971**

*June* Riegle writes in his diary on the 6<sup>th</sup> about presidential developments: "Ted Kennedy is unwilling to accept any engagements that might suggest a candidacy." (Don Riegle with Trevor Armbrister, *O Congress*, New York: Doubleday, 1972, pp. 63)

**1973** Riegle switches parties to become a Democrat.

### **1976**

*November* Riegle is elected to the Senate as a Democrat from Michigan.

### **1977**

*January* Riegle is placed on the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee with EMK.

*July* The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, which Riegle sits on, votes 12-3 on EMK's bill (S 1750) on the health risks of saccharin. The bill mandates studies of saccharin causing bladder tumors and imposes health warning on advertising. It is the restrictions on broadcast advertisement that brings the bill to Riegle's committee. Senator Howard Cannon (D-NV) amends the bill to delete the requirement for radio and television ads. Riegle votes against the bill with the amendment, but it passes. EMK tries to amend the bill on the Senate floor to bring back the requirement, but the amendment is tabled by a 52-42 vote. Riegle supports EMK's amendment. (*1977 CQ Almanac*, pp. 497-498)

*October* On the 12<sup>th</sup>, the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee reports on S Rept 95-493 protecting workers from mandatory retirement. EMK votes to exempt public elementary and secondary school teachers with Riegle voting against. The amendment passes 8-5. (*1977 CQ Almanac*, pp. 156)

Congress gives final approval to raise the minimum wage from \$2.30/hr. to \$3.35/hr. for all workers by 1981. The final bill is a compromise from S 1871 that would have raised the wage to \$3.40/hr. EMK and Riegle vote in favor of both bills. (*1977 CQ Almanac*, pp. 138-144, 77-S, 78-S)

## 1978

- August* On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, EMK, Riegle, and 16 other senators announce their opposition to the latest compromise on the natural gas bill (S Rept 95-1126). The group threatens to return the bill back to conference to work on the utility rate reform and conservation portions of the bill. Their motion to recommit fails in a 39-59 vote. Both chambers pass the bill. (1978 CQ Almanac, pp. 656)
- June* The Senate fails to pass major labor law reform. The bill will speed up the decision process for the National Labor Relations Board and make it easier for unions to organize and negotiate agreements. For weeks, the Senate debates HR 8410. Six votes for cloture fail to get the required 60 votes (42-47, 49-41, 54-43, 58-41, 58-39, 53-45), and the bill returns to committee. EMK and Riegle vote in favor for all cloture motions. No further action is taken. (1978 CQ Almanac, pp. 284-287, 27-S, 28-S)
- July* The Senate debates S 2850 which funds Older Americans Act programs for two more years. EMK successfully amends the bill to provide separate authorization for home delivered meals (Meals on Wheels) with spending ceilings of \$100 million for FY 1979 and \$120 million for FY 1980. EMK argues the nutrition program competes with other meal programs, thus not reaching its full potential. EMK also argues it would not affect the congregate meal program. Senator Thomas F. Eagleton (D-MO) tries to table the amendment because he believes it would give too much money to the nutrition programs, since S 2850 already provides a 50 percent increase in those programs. The Eagleton motion fails by a vote of 30-60. Riegle votes against Eagleton. (1978 CQ Almanac, pp. 585-586, 37-S)
- September* On the 14<sup>th</sup>, EMK introduces his welfare reform bill, which would mandate coverage for intact families, establish new rights and responsibilities for welfare recipients, increase federal spending to ease state burdens, establish incentives and penalties to improve bureaucratic efficiency and lower errors, and expand the earned income tax credit for the working poor. The bill (S 3498) costs \$7.1 billion, but it never reaches the Senate floor. (1978 CQ Almanac, pp. 603)
- October* Congress passes legislation to extend the programs under the Older Americans Act through 1981. The separate authorization for the Meals on Wheels remains intact. It will get \$80 million in 1979, \$100 million in 1980, and \$120 million in 1981. Riegle and EMK vote in favor. (1978 CQ Almanac, pp. 583)
- Congress passes the Export-Import Bank bill (HR 14279) which includes a provision restricting banks to extend credit for any exports that would help South Africa maintain or enforce apartheid, unless South African businesses improve conditions for the non-white employee. This bill comes from Riegle's Banking Committee. Riegle introduces this South African amendment to the bank bill, while Representative Paul Tsongas (D-IL) adds it to the House bill. (1978 CQ Almanac, pp. 398; Washington Post, 5/2/1978)

## 1979

- January* EMK becomes chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

- July* Paul Kirk establishes connections with Riegle to keep tabs on the political environment in Michigan for a possible run by EMK for the 1980 Democratic presidential nomination. (Milton Gwirtzman, "Overview Memo: Running and Not Running for President, 1972-1988," pp. 13)
- October* On the 25<sup>th</sup>, the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee reports on S 1724 authorizing \$7 billion for a fuel assistance program for the poor through two years. Southern Senators lose a fight to allocate more money for air conditioning costs vs. the Committee's formula focusing more on winter heating. S 1724 passes the Senate, but stalls in the House. (1979 CQ Almanac, pp. 623)
- November* EMK announces he will challenge Carter for the Democratic presidential nomination.
- On the 9<sup>th</sup>, Congress passes legislation (PL 96-126) to allocate \$1.6 billion for poor families to pay for heating bills for the upcoming winter. (1979 CQ Almanac, pp. 535-536)
- On the 29<sup>th</sup>, the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee reports on S 1725 which authorizes \$2.2 billion to help low-income families make their homes more energy-efficient. The smaller existing program is administered by the Energy Department, but this bill transfers the program to the anti-poverty Community Service Agency (CSA), which the Labor Committee oversees. It also removes the fixed limits on spending for each home. (1979 CQ Almanac, pp. 536)

## 1980

- February* On the 28<sup>th</sup>, the Senate passes S 1725 but it does not leave the House due to a jurisdictional fight over whether the Energy Department or the Community Service Administration (CSA) should run the program. Riegle and EMK vote for the bill. (1980 CQ Almanac, pp. 462-463, 10-S)
- May* On the 8<sup>th</sup>, Riegle leads the fight on the Senate floor to prevent \$7.9 billion cuts in Social Security supported by the Reagan Administration. EMK joins the debate to save the money, but they lose in a 49-42 vote. (Washington Post, 5/9/1981)
- May-June* On the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee reports on reauthorizing the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) for two years (S 2337). On the 2<sup>nd</sup>, Riegle votes for reauthorization with an amendment to prohibit LSC lawyers from handling abortion cases unless the abortion is necessary to save the life of the mother or to terminate a pregnancy stemming from rape or incest. The bill passes the Senate. (1980 CQ Almanac, pp. 399-400, 31-S)
- July* On the 24<sup>th</sup>, The Senate Labor Committee holds hearings on the economy with Assistant Secretary of Labor Ernest Green. During the hearing, Riegle and EMK, who is running against Carter, criticize Green on Carter's plans to fight the recession. (Washington Post, 7/25/1980)
- August* EMK withdraws his bid for the presidency in a powerful speech to the Democratic National Convention.
- November* Reagan wins the 1980 presidential election. The Republicans win control of the Senate and EMK loses chairmanship of the Judiciary Committee.

## 1981

- January* Riegle and EMK are placed on the Subcommittee on Labor where both serve together until 1985.
- On the 12<sup>th</sup>, EMK and Riegle question Labor Secretary designate Raymond Donovan about putting a “ghost” foreman on his construction company’s payroll. EMK, Riegle, and three other Democrats are still unsure about the nomination and vote “present.” Donovan is nominated. (*Washington Post*, 1/13/1981; *New York Times*, 3/31/1981)
- October* On the 28<sup>th</sup>, the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee confirm Dr. C Everett Coop as surgeon general by a vote of 11-5. The National Organization for Women opposes Coop, especially for his attacks on Planned Parenthood, the intrauterine device (IUD), and his reportedly anti-abortion stance. EMK and Riegle oppose the nomination. Coop wins the nomination with both men voting against it. (1981 *CQ Almanac*, pp. 492-493)
- November* On the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Senate passes, by a vote of 72-0, S 1086 to extend the Older Americans Act programs through fiscal 1984. EMK amends the bill on the Senate floor to prohibit states from cutting their share of funds spent on Meals on Wheels. The Senate adopts the conference report in December. EMK and Riegle vote for the extension. (1981 *CQ Almanac*, pp. 496, 76-S)

## 1982

- April-July* On April 22<sup>nd</sup>, Riegle votes for S 2036, the EMK-Quayle job training bill in the Subcommittee on Employment and Productivity in a 7-0 vote. EMK and Riegle vote for S. 2036 in the full labor committee in May. By July, it unanimously passes the Senate. The House passes it and it becomes law in October. (Richard Fenno, Jr., *The Making of a Senator: Dan Quayle*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1989, pp. 73, 87; 1982 *CQ Almanac*, pp. 39-42)
- December* EMK announces he will not run for president in 1984.

## 1983

- January* Riegle and EMK are placed on the Subcommittee on Employment and Productivity where they both serve until 1985.
- May* EMK, Riegle, and Alan Cranston (D-CA) lead liberal opposition on the floor against an immigration reform bill (S 529), fearing it would encourage discrimination against Hispanics. They gain some ground on judicial review for those denied asylum: the Senate passes an EMK-Simpson amendment expanding rights to judicial review in return for a pledge from the ACLU not to lobby against the streamlined asylum procedures. An EMK co-sponsored amendment to provide remedies for discrimination in enforcement procedures is rejected, as is an attempt to terminate employer sanctions after five years if they proved discriminatory, and a floor attempt to revise the deadline for temporary residency status to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1981. Jesse Helms (R-NC) attempts to remove the entire amnesty program (failing 21-76) and then proposes an amendment permitting states to exclude the children of illegal immigrants from public schools. EMK

adamantly opposes the amendment and defeats it (31-63). Riegle supports EMK's efforts with the exception of legalization costs. Two amendments come up to require the federal government to reimburse the states for any costs. Riegle supports the amendments with EMK voting against. One of them passes. The bill passes the Senate on the 18<sup>th</sup>, 76-18, with EMK and Riegle voting against it. (1983 *CQ Almanac*, pp. 288-289, 21-S; *Washington Post*, 5/19/1983)

## 1984

*March* On the 29<sup>th</sup>, EMK and Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) attempt to curtail Reagan's policy in Central America. EMK introduces two amendments that require Congressional approval to send combat troops to Central America. During debate, both EMK and Riegle invoke the memory of Vietnam. Riegle supports EMK's amendments, but both are defeated. (1984 *CQ Almanac*, pp. 434, 10-S)

## 1985

*January* Riegle leaves the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee. He remains on the Senate Commerce Committee and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

*June* On the 24<sup>th</sup>, EMK introduces S 1346, a bill to provide for the solvency of the Medicare program and to reform the health care financing system. Riegle is one of four co-sponsors on the bill. It goes to the Finance Committee. (THOMAS on S 1346)

*September* On the 9<sup>th</sup>, EMK introduces his bill (S 1615) to permit the continuation of health coverage for uninsured individuals and provide incentives to create statewide insurance pools. It also prohibits hospitals from refusing to examine or treat people with medical emergencies. Riegle is the co-sponsor. It is sent to the Labor and Human Resources Committee. The hospital provision of the bill does pass the committee and is attached to a larger budget bill. (1985 *CQ Almanac*, pp. 508; THOMAS on S 1615)

On the Senate floor, controversy erupts over an amendment offered by Pete Wilson (R-CA) to set up a new foreign "guest worker" program primarily to assist agriculture with seasonal labor. His first amendment is tabled on the 12<sup>th</sup>. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, Wilson's second amendment passes when he sets a 350,000 person cap for workers admitted under the program, and Riegle is one of the Senators that votes the cap, while EMK still votes against it. However, Senator Paul Simon (D-IL) then offers a sunset amendment, ending the temporary worker program after three years unless Congress approves an extension. Many of the Senators who had waived on supporting Wilson's program feel more comfortable with the sunset provision. EMK and Riegle vote against the bill. EMK's concerns about expanding any temporary worker program beyond the confines of the existing H-2 program are reportedly based on concerns over worker protections. (1985 *CQ Almanac*, pp. 224-225, 35-S, 37-S)

*December* EMK announces in a televised statement that he will not run for president in 1988. He acknowledges the following day at a news conference that his decision may mean that he will never again run for president.

## 1986

*May* On the 1<sup>st</sup>, EMK's Access to Health Care Act of 1986 (S 2402) is introduced in the Senate. Riegle is one of 4 co-sponsors. The bill requires states to set up insurance pools to uninsured individuals with premiums no more than 1.5 times the normal rate for individual policies. It also requires employers to give four months of benefits for laid-off workers, and includes small business tax deductions. It is sent to the Labor and Human Resources Committee. (*Washington Post*, 5/2/1986; THOMAS on S 2402)

*September* On the 26<sup>th</sup>, Reagan vetoes the South Africa sanctions bill. Riegle joins EMK, Simon, Cranston, and House members to present a rebuttal to the veto. (*Washington Post*, 9/27/1986; Adam Clymer. *Edward Kennedy: A Biography*, New York: William Morrow & Company, 1999, pp. 401)

*November* The Democrats regain control of the Senate in the mid-term elections.  
  
The Iran-Contra scandal breaks in the media.

## **1987**

*January* EMK becomes chairman of the Labor and Human Resources Committee, as well as the Judiciary's Immigration and Refugee Affairs Subcommittee.

Riegle is placed on the Senate Finance Committee and sits on the Subcommittee on Health for Families and the Uninsured.

*May* On the 29<sup>th</sup>, the Senate Finance Committee unanimously approves S 1127 on catastrophic medical expenses. The bill is co-sponsored by Riegle and the other Democrats on the committee. The program is optional for people under Medicare Part B. In committee, Riegle amends the bill to repeal the three day prior hospitalization requirement that Medicare demands for in skilled-nursing homes. The Senate places the language of this bill into HR 2470. (*1987 CQ Almanac*, pp. 500-501)

*Fall* EMK leads the fight in the Senate to defeat the Bork nomination.

*October* The Senate passes catastrophic illness bill (HR 2470). The measure entitles Medicare beneficiaries to increased nursing home coverage and an outpatient drug benefit and places limits on out of pocket expenses. The bill includes an amendment offered by EMK and Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) that guarantees that if one spouse enters a nursing home, the other would not need to become impoverished before becoming eligible for Medicaid. The amendment enables the at-home spouse to keep up to \$12,000 in assets and \$750 a month without those assets being counted in determining Medicaid eligibility. (*Washington Post*, 10/28/1987, 11/08/1987)

## **1988**

*January* Riegle becomes Chairman of the Finance Committee's Subcommittee on Health for Families and the Uninsured. He serves as Chair until his retirement in 1995.

*March* On the 5<sup>th</sup>, EMK, Riegle, and 28 other Senators sign a letter criticizing Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and his Likud Party for blocking any peace by



resisting a land for peace deal. (*New York Times*, 3/6/1988; *Washington Post*, 3/8/1988)

**1989** EMK and Riegle create the Bi-Committee Bi-Partisan Senate Working Group on Universal Access for universal healthcare reform. They invite Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Robert Dole (R-KS), Daniel Moynihan (D-NY), John Rockefeller (D-WV), David Durenberger (R-MN), Robert Packwood (R-OR), David Pryor (D-AR), Howard Metzenbaum (D-OH), George Mitchell (D-ME), and John Chafee (R-RI). For the first six months, it is mostly staff level meetings. Over the next year or two, members met every week or two in Riegle's office. (*1989 CQ Almanac*, pp. 171; Clymer interview with Nick Littlefield, Cambridge, Mass., 1/30/1999, pp. 2; Mark A. Peterson, "Report from Congress: Momentum toward Health Care Reform in the U.S. Senate," *Journal of Health Politics*, Fall 1992, pp. 556-557)

**1990** The Bi-Committee Bi-Partisan Working Group develops two smaller groups. EMK and Riegle represent the Democrats and Hatch and Chafee the Republicans. By the end of the year and into 1991, EMK and Hatch work on the private employment-based portion, while Riegle and Chafee work on the new public program. (Peterson, pp. 558)

*November* The Senate Ethics Committee opens hearings into allegations that Senators John McCain (R-AZ), John Glenn (D-OH), Dennis DeConcini (D-AZ), Riegle, and Cranston (known as the "Keating Five") interfered with the Federal Home Loan Bank Board (FHLBB) on behalf of a major campaign contributor, Charles Keating. Keating was the chairman of the California-based Lincoln Savings and Loan Association, which collapsed in 1989. In November 1991, Riegle gets a mild reprimand by the Ethics Committee. (*1991 CQ Almanac*, pp. 26-38)

**1991**

*January* Congress gives President George Bush authorization to use force against Iraq. On the 12<sup>th</sup>, EMK and Riegle are among the 45 Senate Democrats to vote against the resolution. (*1991 CQ Almanac*, pp. 2-S)

*Spring* The Bi-Partisan Working Group falls apart reportedly over Hatch not willing to compromise on the issue of employer mandates. Around this time, EMK, Riegle, Mitchell, Metzenbaum, Pryor, and Rockefeller form a Democratic leadership group to develop a bill. (Peterson, pp. 557-558)

William Kennedy Smith is charged with sexual battery in Palm Beach, Florida.

*April* Senator Lloyd Bentsen (D-TX), chairman of the Finance Committee, holds hearings on the health care system. (Peterson, pp. 562)

*June* On the 5<sup>th</sup>, Mitchell, Rockefeller, EMK, and Riegle introduce S 1227 "play or pay" health care bill to the press and a group of lobbyists. The bill requires employers to either provide insurance to workers and their dependents or else pay a tax to fund a new government plan. On the same day, it is introduced in the Senate and sent to Riegle's Health for Families and the Uninsured Subcommittee. Bentsen reportedly states he will not mark up S 1227 because it will be too expensive for small businesses. (THOMAS on S 1227; *1991 CQ Almanac*, pp. 354; Peterson, pp. 563; *Washington Post*, 6/6/1991)

*July* The Senate Finance Committee approves S 1554, a measure to extend unemployment benefits authored by Bentsen. It is reported that it is EMK and Riegle who helped Bentsen move forward with the bill. (*Boston Globe*, 7/31/1991)

*October* The Senate holds confirmation hearings for Clarence Thomas.

EMK gives a speech at the Kennedy School at Harvard University in which he acknowledges that he has made mistakes in the conduct of his private life.

## **1992**

*January* EMK helps redraft the health care bill (S 1227) to be considered by the Labor Committee. Among other things, he changes its cost containment provisions. The revised bill includes more than a dozen separate provisions for slowing rising health care costs. Some Democrats on the Labor Committee, who favor a national single-payer system, criticize the bill for not going far enough. The Labor Committee approves the bill by a 10-7 vote. Although EMK tells committee members that Mitchell has promised him that the bill will reach the Senate floor, the bill is never voted on by the full Senate. (Clymer. pp. 508-509; *1992 CQ Almanac*, pp. 401-412; Clymer interview with Nick Littlefield, Cambridge, Mass., 1/31/1999)

*July* EMK marries Vicki Reggie in McLean, Virginia.

*September* On the 25<sup>th</sup>, the Senate passes EMK and Riegle's amendment to the Urban Aid Tax Bill. The amendment authorizes \$500 million in fiscal 1993 in federal assistance for enterprise zones and aid in other urban areas. (*1992 CQ Almanac*, pp. 147-148)

*November* Clinton is elected president, as the Democrats win the House, Senate, and White House.

## **1993**

*January* Clinton appoints Hillary Rodham Clinton to head Health Care Reform Task Force to overhaul the nation's health care system. EMK and Riegle go on to help develop the Clinton health care bill. (*1994 CQ Almanac*, pp. 321)

*November* On the 20<sup>th</sup>, the last day of the congressional session, Clinton's 1,342 page universal health care bill (HR 3600, S 1757) is introduced in Congress. (*1994 CQ Almanac*, pp. 321-323)

Congress enacts the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) by a vote of 61-38. EMK votes for it, since Mexico could provide exports for Massachusetts, yet Riegle votes against it as he is reportedly concerned about fiercer industry competition from abroad and loss of manufacturing jobs. Clinton signs it into law in December. (*1993 CQ Almanac*, pp. 179, 51-S)

## **1994**

- May* EMK's Labor Committee votes 11-6 to approve a health care bill modeled on Clinton's plan, with a three-year phase-in of universal coverage. It is the first congressional committee to act on health care reform. Senator James Jeffords (R-VT) is the only Republican to vote for it, but the bill does reflect Republican input. Like the Clinton plan, the legislation (S 1757) provides universal coverage and requires employers to pay for the bulk of the cost. The bill also includes premium caps to control costs, although EMK originally opposes them. But it departs from it in three important ways. It provides significant exemptions and subsidies for small businesses. It does not require participation in health alliances. And it calls for a more comprehensive benefit package. EMK insists on expanded benefits, which include special care for women, adolescents, the disabled, and the elderly. A national health board would review the benefit package to determine its fiscal impact and recommend changes. The bill also contains an EMK-Kassebaum amendment to fund clinics in public schools. EMK calls the bill "really the beginning" of the process of drafting a health care reform bill. He acknowledges that winning Republican votes for final passage is "still an uphill battle." He continues to stir public interest in universal health insurance through hearings and press conferences. (Clymer, pp. 543; *1994 CQ Almanac*, pp. 336-337)
- July* On the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Senate Finance Committee approves S 2351, its own version of health care reform by a 12-8 vote. The panel abandons the Clinton approach of universal coverage and employer mandates. The bill sets the goal of 95% coverage with subsidies (funded by Medicare cuts) for low-income people to buy insurance. It provides two coverage plans: a comprehensive plan and a plan covering major illness, with people paying for other expenses. During mark-up, Bill Bradley (D-NJ) successfully amends the bill to include a tax on high-cost insurance plans. Riegle, Max Baucus (D-MT), and Moynihan oppose the amendment. Riegle amends the bill to guarantee health insurance subsidies for low-income women and children. (*1994 CQ Almanac*, pp. 338-342)
- Summer/Fall* With no consensus emerging behind any single health care reform bill, Mitchell proposes his own bill which would delay employer mandates and drop price controls, but provide coverage for the unemployed. Despite misgivings, EMK supports the bill saying it is "designed to achieve" universal coverage. A bipartisan group of Senators under the leadership of John Chaffee, known as the Mainstream Group, emerges to oppose the Mitchell plan and propose their own compromise bill. With the Senate Finance Committee having rejected the Clinton plan, Clinton announces he would now be willing to accept 95% coverage. EMK works with Mitchell and Chaffee on a package based on the Mainstream Coalition bill in the fall, but cannot build enough support for a compromise agreement. Mitchell declares health care reform dead.
- November* The GOP wins control of both the House and Senate in the "Republican Revolution." EMK loses his chairmanship of the Labor Committee.
- 1995**
- January* Riegle retires from the Senate.

## **DON RIEGLE-EMK LABOR HIGHLIGHTS**

*Prepared by Bryan Craig*

*Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, 07/1/2008*

---

**1977** Congress gives final approval to raise the minimum wage from \$2.30/hr. to \$3.35/hr. for all workers by 1981.

**1978** The Senate fails to pass major labor law reform. The bill would speed up the decision process for the National Labor Relations Board and make it easier for unions to organize and negotiate agreements.

EMK introduces his welfare reform bill (S 3498) but it never leaves the committee.

Congress passes legislation to extend the programs under the Older Americans Act through 1981.

**1979** The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee reports on S 1724 authorizing \$7 billion for a fuel assistance program for the poor through two years.

Congress passes legislation (PL 96-126) to allocate \$1.6 billion for poor families to pay for heating bills for the upcoming winter.

The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee reports on S 1725 which authorizes \$2.2 billion to help low-income families make their homes more energy-efficient. It passes the Senate, but not the House.

**1980** The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee approves S 2337 which reauthorizes the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) for two more years with \$321.3 million for fiscal 1981 and additional funding for 1982.

**1981** Senator Dan Quayle (R-IN) and EMK work together to create a job training bill to replace the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA).

The Senate passes, by a vote of 72-0, S 1086 to extend the Older Americans Act programs through fiscal 1984.

**1982** Riegle sits with Quayle on the Subcommittee on Employment and Productivity. The subcommittee passes the EMK-Quayle job training bill and the full Senate passes it in July and it is law by October.

**1984** Congress revamps the weatherization program for the poor to include both heating and cooling costs.

Congress extends the Older Americans Act programs through 1987.

### SELECTED READINGS

- Adam Clymer interview with Nick Littlefield, 1/30/1999, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library.
- Mark A. Peterson, “Momentum toward Health Care Reform in the U.S. Senate,” *Journal of Health Politics*, Fall 1992.
- “Clinton Health Care Overhaul Compared with Committee Bills,” *1994 Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, pp. 346-347.