



EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewer's Briefing Materials **Danica Petroschius Interview, 05/13/2008**

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Miller Center Documents¹

- Danica Petroschius Timeline.

Secondary Source Materials

- Adam Clymer interview with Danica Petroschius, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, 6/5/1999.
- Kate Grusich, "Liberty Grad Makes Name on Capitol Hill," *Daily Herald*, 11/18/2003.
- Laura Capps and Melissa Wagoner, "Sen. Kennedy Issues Statement to Welcome Massachusetts Native Eric Mogilnicki as Chief of Staff," *Hindustan Times*, 01/08/2006.
- Gregg Sangillo, *National Journal*, 03/11/2006.
- Kris Kitto, "Exit Strategy," *The Hill*, 03/03/2008.
- "Trips by Danica Petroschius," (<http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org>).
- Adam Clymer, *Edward M. Kennedy: A Biography* (New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1999) pp. 597-599.
- "ESEA Reauthorization: Where We on the Issues and the Process? A Forum," 11/19/1999.
- "Landmark Education Bill Signed," *2001 CQ Almanac*, pp. 8-3 to 8-10.
- "Press Release from the office of Senator Edward M. Kennedy," *States News Service*, 12/17/2001.
- Pamela M. Prah, "Funding, Vouchers to Dominate Special Education Debate," *Stateline.org*, 02/14/2003.
- "2003 HELP Committee staff," 2003 Congressional Staff Directory, pp. 94, 185-186.
- "2004 EMK Senate office staff," 2004 Congressional Staff Directory, p. 97.

¹ These are original documents created by Miller Center researchers for the Edward M. Kennedy Oral History Project. Please acknowledge credit for any use of these materials.

Oral History Interviews

- Edward M. Kennedy interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 08/14/2006.
- Adam Clymer interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 07/12/2006.
- Clayton Spencer interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 03/25/2008.
- Ellen Guiney interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 03/24/2008.

Other

- Danica Petroschius, "Education Overview for Oral History," 11/09/2005.

DANICA PETROSHIUS TIMELINE

Prepared by Rob Martin and Dustin Cable

Miller Center, University of Virginia, 05/07/2008

- 1995** Important issues EMK works on in 1995 include the minimum wage, budget reconciliation (EMK tries to restore funding for education and limit spending reductions), and health insurance portability.
- December* Clinton vetoes a budget reconciliation bill that includes major cuts to education spending and provisions to scale back the direct student loan program. (*1995 CQ Almanac*, p. 8-9)
- Late '95/96** **Petroshius** begins working as an education legislative assistant to EMK on the HELP Committee. Nick Littlefield is serving as EMK's minority staff director. **Petroshius** had previously worked as an analyst at the U.S. Department of Education. **Petroshius** serves on the HELP Committee for eight years, moving up to the positions of chief education adviser and deputy staff director before being named as EMK's chief of staff in late 2003.
- 1996** Important issues EMK works on in 1996 include Kennedy/Kassebaum health insurance portability, the minimum wage opposition to the Defense of Marriage Act, and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act.
- 1997** Important issues EMK works on in 1997 include the State Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP), the Presidential Race Initiative and affirmative action, the tobacco case, reauthorization of religious worker visas, and the nomination of Bill Lee to the Civil Rights Commission.
- Nick Littlefield leaves the HELP Committee and is replaced by Mike Myers as staff director.
- September* The Labor Committee by voice vote approves a bill (S 1186) co-sponsored by EMK and Paul Wellstone (D-MN) to consolidate state job training, vocational education, and adult education programs, with specific funding streams for each. "One-stop" customer service centers would coordinate the programs. Although there is wide bipartisan support for the bill, it goes no further in 1997. (*1997 CQ Almanac*, p. 7-21)
- December* EMK gives a speech at the National Press Club in which he warns of a coming shortage of teachers and calls on the federal government to provide half of the ten million new teachers that will be needed. Congress should "bring one hundred thousand new, well trained teachers into our public schools each year over the next ten years." Clinton adopts the new teacher proposal in his 1998 state of the union speech. (Clymer, pp. 597-598)

- 1998** Important issues EMK works on in 1998 include the new teacher legislation, Children's Firearm Safety Act, opposition to Crime Victims' Constitutional Amendment, baseball antitrust bill, and the Clinton impeachment and trial.
- April* EMK and Patti Murray (D-WA) come close, but ultimately fail 49 to 50, to attach EMK's proposal to hire 100,000 more teachers to a bill. EMK and Murray both make impassioned speeches on the Senate floor in favor of the plan. EMK ridicules the Republicans' support for vouchers for private schools. He says the problem is not public education but that "class sizes are too large." EMK and Murray try to attach the proposal to budget and appropriations measures throughout the year. (Clymer, pp. 597-598)
- 1999** Important issues EMK works on in 1999 include the Juvenile Justice Act, post-Columbine gun control measures, and the tobacco lawsuit.
- April* Congress clears and the President signs an "Ed-Flex" bill giving local school systems greater autonomy in how they use federal education money. The new law gives states the power to grant local schools waivers from some federal regulations (not health, safety, or civil rights). Republicans stymie Democratic efforts to use the bill as a vehicle for many of Clinton's education priorities, including hiring new teachers to reduce class size. The Senate clears the bill 98-1, with EMK voting for it. (1999 CQ Almanac, p. 10-12)
- November* After a long struggle over education issues, Congress passes a Labor-HHS spending bill for fiscal 2000 that includes \$1.2 billion as a first installment on EMK's and administration's proposal to hire 100,000 new teachers in next seven years. Clinton signs the bill after vetoing an earlier bill that did not include funding for new teachers. During negotiations for the bill, Republicans win provisions that increase money allocated for teacher training and repeal Clinton's Goals 2000 program. The measure also imposes tougher standards for teacher quality. (1999 CQ Almanac, p. 2-94)
- 2000** Important issues EMK works on in 2000 include the Religious Liberty Protection Act.
- April* The Senate (51 to 49) approves an EMK-amendment reducing the Republicans' proposed five year tax cut of \$2.7 billion to provide a corresponding increase in the Pell grant program, which provides grants to lower-income students to help pay for education expenses, as part of its version of a budget resolution measure. (2000 CQ Almanac, pp. 6-12, 6-20)
- May* Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-MS) pulls an ESEA reauthorization bill from the floor after it becomes bogged down in ideological disputes and Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) threatens to attach a gun control amendment to the bill. It marks the first time Congress has failed to reauthorize ESEA in its history. Republicans try to use the measure to give state and local authorities more control over education

spending, through block grants and pilot programs, while Democrats fight to retain the targeting of federal dollars to specific needs. During the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee debate over the bill, EMK criticizes Chairman James Jeffords' (R-VT) proposal to roll a number of education programs into block grants. EMK introduces his own amendment, a comprehensive, \$2 billion teacher quality program that would be exempt from the block grant proposal. The HELP Committee approves the Jeffords bill on a 10 to 8 party line vote, rejecting the EMK-amendment by the same margin. Nevertheless, EMK is a "thorn in Republicans' side throughout the education debate." He criticizes Republican support for tax cuts over higher education funding. Congress ends up funding ESEA programs for an additional year in an omnibus spending package. (*2000 CQ Almanac*, pp. 9-3, 9-4, 2-105)

- November* George W. Bush defeats Al Gore in a contested presidential election. The Democrats pick up seats in the Senate to force a 50-50 split.
- 2001** Important issues EMK works on in 2001 include No Child Left Behind, opposition to the Bush judicial nominations and the Ashcroft attorney general nomination, Uniting and Strengthening America Act, Immigration Reform/INS reorganization, military tribunals and indefinite detentions and Robert F. Kennedy Department of Justice.
- January* The Democrats regain control of the Senate for 17 days until Gore, who has been the tie-breaking vote in the evenly split Senate as Vice President, is replaced by Dick Cheney, giving the GOP control of the House, Senate, and White House.
- May* The Democrats regain control of the Senate when Jeffords leaves the Republican Party to caucus with the Democrats as an Independent. EMK regains chairmanship of the HELP Committee, as well as the Judiciary's Immigration and Refugee Affairs Subcommittee.
- September* 9/11 terrorist attacks.
- December* The Senate passes (87 to 10) a landmark ESEA reauthorization bill (No Child Left Behind Act) that for the first time ties federal education aid to improvements in student test scores. It requires statewide student testing and schools to set and meet "academic proficiency" standards. Schools who fail to meet the standards stand to lose federal funding. The bill contains the bulk of President George Bush's education proposals. But EMK works closely with Bush on the bill, shepherds the bill through the Senate, and leaves his own mark on it. EMK wins more targeting of federal education spending and more money for teachers. He also helps to thwart private school vouchers and limit open-ended block grants to pilot programs. During floor debate on the bill, Jeffords switches parties, putting the Democrats in the majority and making EMK bill manager for the majority. The 9-11 terrorist attacks occur during the debate, but Bush and the bill's main supporters - - EMK, Judd Gregg (R-NH), Rep. John Boehner (R-OH), and Rep.

George Miller (D-CA) press on with their negotiations. (*2001 CQ Almanac*, pp. 8-3 to 8-10)

2002 Important issues EMK works on in 2002 include opposition to the Bush judicial nominations, Unaccompanied Alien Child Protection Act, Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act, extension of Section 245(i) of immigration law, Prison Rape Reduction Act and the Department of Homeland Security.

November The Republicans regain control of the Senate in the midterm elections, returning to the GOP control of the House, Senate, and White House. EMK loses chairmanship of the HELP Committee.

2003 Important issues EMK works on in 2003 include Head Start bill, opposition to the Bush judicial nominations, submitted brief in SCOTUS affirmative action case, opposition to medical malpractice reform, Amber Alert Bill, Military Naturalization Bill, and renewal of Undetectable Firearms Act.

September During floor debate over an omnibus spending bill for Labor, HHS, and Education, EMK and Gregg, the new HELP Chairman, team up to help defeat (28 to 67) a proposal by Richard Durbin (D-IL) to prohibit sanctions against schools that fail to meet mandated achievement standards under No Child Left Behind, if the law is not funded to its full authorization levels. The Senate also rejects (46 to 49) an EMK amendment to provide an additional \$2.3 billion for higher education, including \$1.7 billion in Pell Grants. (*2003 CQ Almanac*, p. 2-67)

October The Help Committee unanimously approves a Head Start bill written by EMK and Greg. Unlike a House bill that passed by only one vote in July, the Greg-EMK bill does not include a pilot program that would allow eight states to experiment with integrating their own early childhood programs with Head Start. Head Start is federally funded but is operated by local groups. Senate Democrats prevent the bill from coming to the floor in 2003 and 2004, fearing Republicans would add the pilot program in conference. (*2004 CQ Almanac*, p. 7-4)

November **Petroshius** is named EMK's chief of staff. She replaces Mary Beth Cahill, who is leaving to run Senator John Kerry's 2004 presidential campaign. **Petroshius** had most recently been serving as EMK's deputy staff director on the HELP Committee.

2004 Important issues EMK works on in 2004 include IDEA reauthorization, opposition to the recess appointments of Charles Pickering and William Pryor, opposition to Federal Marriage Amendment, opposition to Bush judicial nominations, theft of confidential computer files related to judicial nominations, increase in H-2B visa cap, resettlement for Vietnamese refugees in the Philippines, asbestos legislation, Crime Victims' Rights Act, Safe, Orderly, Legal Visas and Enforcement Act, hate crimes, abuse at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, and expiration of the Assault Weapons Ban.

- January* During debate over the conference report for the 2003 omnibus spending bill for Labor, HHS, and Education, the Senate (46 to 51) rejects an EMK proposal to increase education spending \$6 billion. The EMK amendment is part of a fierce fight over education spending. Democrats and moderate Republicans charge that President Bush is not allocating enough money for poor schools to meet new testing standards under his No Child Left Behind legislation. The Senate does pass (52 to 45) an amendment offered by Gregg adding \$5 billion for innovative education programs, financed by across-the-board cuts in the omnibus bill. (2003 *CQ Almanac*, pp. 2-18 to 2-19)
- May* The Senate begins work on reauthorization bills for IDEA, first enacted in 1975, and rewritten in 1997 (PL 108-446). The main issues of concern during the reauthorization are disciplinary standards for special needs students, and whether program funding should remain discretionary. EMK works with Gregg to draft a compromise bill (S 1248), after a similar bill they proposed in June 2003 fails to reach the floor before the end of session. The EMK-Gregg bill passes May 13th. (2003 *CQ Almanac*, pp. 8-5-8-7; 2004 *CQ Almanac*, pp. 7-3-7-5)
- July* EMK successfully works to bring the 2004 Democratic National Convention to Boston. John Kerry is nominated as the Democratic presidential nominee.
- November* Bush defeats Kerry in the presidential election.
- Despite House passage in April 2003, Senate Democrats delay the conference on the IDEA reauthorization until EMK is able to secure greater influence for conferees. The conference report clears both the House and Senate on the 19th, and is signed by Bush on December 3rd. The final bill reauthorizes IDEA through 2011, with provisions to increase federal funding, raise teacher standards, and give parents more flexibility in dealing with program rules. (2003 *CQ Almanac*, pp. 8-5 to 8-7; 2004 *CQ Almanac*, pp. 7-3 to 7-5)
- 2005** Important issues EMK works on in 2005 include Higher Education Act, opposition to Bush judicial nomination, including John Roberts for Chief Justice and the Alberto Gonzalez nomination as attorney general, opposition to bankruptcy reform, opposition to the “nuclear option,” opposition to Class Action reform, asbestos legislation, increase in the H-2B Visa cap, opposition to reauthorization of the Patriot Act, funding for off-site judicial security, Kennedy-McCain and comprehensive immigration reform, opposition to liability protections for gun manufacturers, and the tobacco settlement.
- September* The HELP Committee unanimously approves a five-year reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (S 1614) as the result of a bipartisan effort led by EMK and committee Chairman Michael Enzi (R-WY). The bill is projected to reduce spending on mandatory student loan programs by \$7 billion over five years in compliance with instructions in a budget resolution. But it also authorizes \$8

billion in new money for student aid programs. The measure does not reach the floor in 2005, but some of the provisions governing student loans are folded into a budget resolution bill. (*2005 CQ Almanac*, pp. 7-5 to 7-6)

2006

Petroshius steps down as EMK's chief of staff. She takes a position with Collaborative Communications Group as senior vice president in March. Mike Myers serves as acting chief of staff until Eric Mogilnicki formally takes the position in early 2006.