What a remarkable life Edward M. Kennedy lived. When I first met Senator Kennedy in 1963, I mistakenly believed he was in office because of his family connections. As I watched and interacted with him over the subsequent decades of his great legislative career--matched by few if any--he demonstrated a strong work ethic. No one worked harder. He had a deep commitment to freedom, fairness, and justice, and his persistent defense of the `little guy' was absolutely genuine. The result is a body of legislation that has brought equality, justice, and opportunity to millions. This towering figure was an inspiration to so many of his colleagues, and he showed each of us--from the most senior to the most junior--the highest level of consideration.

My thoughts go out to his family, including his wife Vicki and his son Patrick, who is a close friend of mine. Edward M. Kennedy will live on in the accomplishments he leaves. May all of those close to him know we are grateful for his service to the nation.