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**STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY ON PASSAGE OF THE FDA
REVITALIZATION ACT**

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Today, Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, release this statement in response to the passage of the FDA Revitalization Act.

"This landmark legislation creates a stronger Food and Drug Administration and sets forth a new and better direction for the safety of drugs we take and the food we eat. Almost half of all Americans take at least one pill a day, so this legislation will make a difference in the life of every American family. From prescription drugs to pacemakers to chemotherapy to the food we eat, the FDA protects the health of hundreds of millions of Americans --- often in ways we barely realize.

The FDA should be the gold standard for safety but its luster has been tarnished in recent years by failure to protect the American people from unsafe drugs. Congress has ample power to restore the luster that FDA has lost in recent years and the bill we just passed represents a bipartisan consensus on the best way to get the job done.

Safety and better access are at the core of the bill. It greatly improves the way the FDA oversees the safety of the drugs. It recognizes that when patients are in danger, the FDA should not have to wait to get legal opinions to decide how to protect health. It should be able to act immediately, and our bill gives it that authority.

The bill also contains an important first step to better protect the food we and our pets eat by strengthening FDA oversight and establishing strong new quality standards for pet food. It addresses the important issue of prescription drug advertising, by providing a constitutionally sound, effective, workable way to see that ads targeting consumers provide accurate information to patients. It will end the abuse of so-called "citizen petitions," while preserving FDA's ability to review any such petitions that have public health merit.

In this new era of the life sciences, medical advances will continue to bring immense benefits for our citizens. To fulfill the potential of that bright future, we need not only brilliant researchers to develop the drugs of tomorrow, but also strong and vigilant watchdogs for public health to guarantee that new drugs and medical devices are safe and beneficial, and that they actually reach the patients who urgently need them."