NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER DONATE NOW!
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Vicki for Senate

Michael Sean Winters | Aug. 31, 2009 NCR Today

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts must decide if it wants to be without a second Senator for the next five months. It would be a cruel irony if a Senate filibuster could not be broken because Sen. Edward Kennedy?s seat was unfilled. On CNN Saturday, John King said that the chances of amending the current law, which prevents the Governor from naming a temporary replacement, stood at 50-50 when he arrived in Boston on Wednesday but that by the time of the funeral on Saturday, the odds had improved to 80-20. The reason: Kennedy?s widow, Vicki Regge Kennedy, had called the leaders of the legislature to invite them to the funeral and to tell them how much her husband wanted them to provide for his seat to be filled promptly.

I do not doubt Vicki Kennedy?s persuasive powers which is why, if the law is changed, Governor Deval Patrick should nominate her to fill her husband?s seat. She warmly embraced every speaker as they left the podium at the wake in the JFK Library Friday night, including Republican Senators Orrin Hatch and John McCain. I do not think she could get them to vote for health care reform legislation that they opposed on principle. I do not think her husband could have persuaded them either. But, she might be able to persuade every member of the Democratic caucus to vote for cloture, whether they voted in favor of the final bill or not. You need 60 votes to end debate but you only need 50 votes to pass a bill.

Mrs. Kennedy was the quintessence of grace and dignity at the funeral. By all accounts, her devotion to her husband and the love with which she surrounded him in his last months, permitted him to die with dignity. She, more than anyone, has the ability to invoke his name in the upcoming debate on health care reform. And, I can think of no better way she could honor her husband?s memory than by helping to push the legislation for which he worked so long across the finish line.

Source URL (retrieved on *05/06/2015 - 12:07*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/vicki-senate