

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022

Statement on the Death of Former Senator Orrin G. Hatch

April 24, 2022

Jill and I and the entire Biden family are saddened to learn of the passing of Orrin Hatch, the longest serving Senator in Utah's history and the longest serving Republican Senator in our Nation's history.

Orrin Hatch once shared in an interview that he had a soft side and he had a tough side. To serve with Orrin, as I did for over three decades, was to see—and appreciate—both.

He was the fighter who carried with him the memory of his humble upbringing near Pittsburgh, who never humored a bully, or shied from a challenge; the young man who, upon receiving his degree from Brigham Young University, was the first in his family to graduate college; the young lawyer who built a successful law practice; and the Senator who sprinted from meeting to meeting because there was so much to do. Indeed, when Senator Hatch retired, he had sponsored or cosponsored more legislation than any Senator at the time.

I saw that energetic, sharp-elbowed Orrin in the many battles we had over tax policy, the right of workers to join a union, and many others. At the same time, Senator Hatch was also a man of deep faith; a gentle soul who wrote songs and poems, and shared them with friends, colleagues, and the world. This was the Orrin who looked out for the people who often didn't have a voice in our laws and our country. I saw this in his efforts to pass the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

When I first launched the Cancer Moonshot as Vice President, one of the first visits I made was to the Huntsman Cancer Institute in Salt Lake City, at Orrin's request. We both saw speeding the pace of cancer research as an issue that transcended political divisions.

When I cast my 10,000th vote in the Senate, Orrin came to the Senate floor, and we had a chance to speak. I said that the greatest perk one has as a Senator was access to people with serious minds, a serious sense of purpose, and who cared about something. That was Orrin. He was, quite simply, an American original.

Jill and I send our deepest sympathies to Elaine, and all of the Hatch children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Categories: Statements by the President : Deaths :: Hatch, former Sen. Orrin G.

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