



EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewer's Briefing Materials Trent Lott Interview, 07/22/2008

Robert A. Martin, Research Director

Miller Center Documents¹

- Trent Lott Timeline.
- Trent Lott Fact Sheet.

Secondary Source Materials

- Trent Lott bio, <http://bioguide.congress.gov>.
- Adam Clymer, *Edward M. Kennedy: A Biography* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1999) pp. 578-582, 600-602.
- Trent Lott, *Herding Cats: A Life in Politics* (New York: Regan Books, 2005) pp. 129-134, 146-167, 169-203, 284-291.
- "Passions run high as Congress wages into tobacco issue," *1997 Congressional Quarterly Almanac* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1997) pp. 3-3 to 3-7.

Oral History Interviews

- Melody Barnes interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller center, University of Virginia, 08/16/2006.
- Adam Clymer interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller center, University of Virginia, 07/12/2006.
- James Flug interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller center, University of Virginia, 12/18/2007.
- Orrin Hatch interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller center, University of Virginia, 05/24/2006.
- John Hilley interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller center, University of Virginia, 09/21/2007.

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.

- C. Everett Koop interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller center, University of Virginia, 09/25/2007.
- Nick Littlefield interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller center, University of Virginia, 05/03/2008.
- Edward M. Kennedy interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller center, University of Virginia, 08/14/2006.

TRENT C. LOTT TIMELINE

Prepared by Mark D. Nevin; revised by Jan Heininger

Miller center, University of Virginia, 07/18/2008

- 1941** Trent Chester Lott is born in Grenada, Mississippi. (*Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress*)
- 1963** Lott earns a B.P.A. at the University of Mississippi. (*Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress*)
- 1967** Lott earns a J.D. at the University of Mississippi. He is admitted to the Mississippi bar and begins practicing in Pascagoula. (*Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress*)
- 1968-1972** Lott serves as administrative assistant to U.S. Representative William M. Colmer (D-MS). (*Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress*)
- 1973** Lott is elected as a U.S. Representative to Congress (R-MS). Lott serves in the House until 1989. (*Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress*)
- 1981-1988** Lott serves as House minority whip. (*Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress*)
- 1988** Lott is elected to the U.S. Senate (R-MS). Dick Morris, future political strategist for President Bill Clinton, is Lott's campaign advisor. (*Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress*; Trent Lott, *Herding Cats: A Life in Politics*, Regan Books: New York, 2005, p. 102)
- 1991**
- Spring* William Kennedy Smith is charged with sexual battery in Palm Beach, Florida.
- October* The Senate holds confirmation hearings for Clarence Thomas.
- EMK gives a speech at the Kennedy School at Harvard University in which he acknowledges that he has made mistakes in the conduct of his private life.
- 1992**
- July* EMK marries Vicki Reggie in McLean, Virginia.
- November* Clinton is elected president, as the Democrats win the House, Senate, and White House.

1994

November Lott is reelected to the Senate; EMK narrowly defeats Mitt Romney to win reelection to the U.S. Senate. The GOP wins control of both the House and Senate in the “Republican Revolution.” EMK loses his chairmanship of the Labor Committee.

1995

January Rose Kennedy dies.

November-December A budget stand-off between Congressional Republicans and the Clinton White House leads to shutdowns of the federal government. Opinion polls show Americans blame Congressional Republicans for the shutdowns. (*1995 CQ Almanac*, p. 1-11)

1995-1996 Lott serves as Republican party whip in the Senate. (*Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress*)

1996

March Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole (R-KS), the Republican nominee for president, withdraws a promise from Lott to allow Democrats to offer an amendment creating some new park areas to an army base redevelopment bill. Dole reportedly fears that Democrats will attach an amendment for minimum wage legislation to the bill, which is precisely what EMK and John Kerry (D-MA) do after Dole makes a rare parliamentary slip. Republican business supporters oppose the increase but polls show there is public support for it. (Clymer, p. 574)

June During negotiations over the Kennedy-Kassebaum health insurance portability bill EMK complains about Dole’s inaction. Lott responds by saying that “Ted Kennedy does not rule the world.” (Clymer, p. 576)

Lott is elected Senate majority leader after Dole resigns from the Senate to campaign for the presidency. The night after Lott’s election, Dick Morris, Lott’s former campaign advisor and current Clinton political strategist, calls Lott to suggest he and Clinton forge a working relationship. Over the next few months, Lott works with the President to enact a series of landmark bills, including welfare reform and a balanced budget act, with Morris as the intermediary. Senate Democrats, including EMK, play only a minor role in these negotiations. Lott calls Senate Democrats a “fifth wheel.” EMK does join with Daniel Moynihan (D-NY) in what Clymer calls “futile opposition” to welfare reform. But before they can deal with other legislation Lott tells Morris that they have to get the minimum wage bill off the floor. Lott agrees to a vote on the minimum wage on July 9, with the wage increase coupled with a variety of tax breaks. (Lott, pp. 130-131; Clymer, pp. 576, 578, 581)

July

After the defeat of a Republican amendment to exempt small businesses from the minimum wage increase, the Senate (72 to 24) passes the minimum wage legislation, increasing the minimum hourly wage 50 cents to \$5.15 and providing a package of tax incentives to large and small businesses. EMK votes for the bill and Lott votes against it. But Don Nickles (R-OK) blocks the bill from going to conference. He says he will not allow the bill to move until EMK agrees to a conference on his health insurance bill. (Clymer, p. 579; *1996 CQ Almanac*, p. S-35)

In late July, Lott, although publicly blaming EMK for the delay with the health insurance bill, works behind-the-scenes with EMK and the Clinton administration to reach an agreement. The main sticking point is medical savings accounts (MSAs), which Republicans support and Democrats oppose. Lott tells the President through Morris that Democrats will have to compromise on MSAs. Clinton agrees to a small regional trial for MSAs, but Lott turns down the offer. Morris suggests putting a cap on the number of Americans who could enroll. Clinton shoots down the proposal, but tells Lott he is willing to continue talking. Lott suggests EMK try to work out an agreement with Ways and Means chairman Bill Archer (D-TX). EMK and Archer eventually agree on an MSA pilot program capped at 750,000 that could expand after four years, subject to congressional vote. Kennedy allows conferees to be appointed to work out other differences on the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill, but the conference does not go smoothly. Lott inserts a provision for a two-year extension of a patent on an anti-arthritis drug, Lodine, in violation of conference rules because the provision fell outside the scope of the original bill. Paul Wellstone (D-MN) threatens to filibuster the conference report. At the same time, a congressional newspaper reports that the husband of a Lott aide works for the company that makes Lodine. EMK works out a compromise with Lott and other congressional leaders to remove the provision and pass the bill. (Clymer, pp. 578-581; Lott, pp. 133-134)

August

On the 21st, Clinton signs both the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill and the minimum wage legislation. Clymer calls this the “biggest lawmaking day” of EMK’s career. (*1996 CQ Almanac*, p. C-43; Clymer, p. 581)

Late Summer

Dick Morris is caught in an adulterous affair in a Washington hotel and is forced to resign. Lott’s back channel to the White House continues through Erskine Bowles, Clinton’s chief of staff. Lott still talks with Clinton regularly. Lott calls Clinton: “The oddest President I have known. . . . He professed to reporters that we ‘weren’t friends,’ then contradicted himself by calling me dozens of times late at night.” Lott says “no president in my adult experience was as personally reckless, and as disappointing, as William Jefferson Clinton.” (Lott, pp. 142, 145, 171, 171)

1997

May

Lott temporarily blocks an EMK and Orin Hatch (R-UT) proposal to spend \$20 billion on children's health care. The proposal would raise \$30 billion from a \$.43 increase to the cigarette tax, with the remaining \$10 million going to help to pay down the national debt. The money would be distributed in block grants to states and processed through their existing bureaucracies. Hatch gathers enough Republican votes to pass the program as an amendment to the budget bill, but Lott threatens to pull support from the balanced budget he had finally negotiated with Clinton. Clinton then pulls his support from EMK and Hatch's bill, and many Democrats and some Republicans switch their votes to oppose the children's health care plan. The EMK-Hatch amendment was defeated 45 to 55. Immediately after pulling support from the amendment, Clinton sends Vice President Al Gore and several aides to EMK to apologize. Clinton later explains that the whole thing was a big misunderstanding. The proposal is eventually funded through a \$24 billion, five year block grant paid for through a small increase in the tobacco tax and other funds. (Clymer, pp. 588-591; *The Boston Globe*, 05/22/1997, 05/23/1997)

June

States Attorneys general, tobacco companies, and plaintiff's lawyers reach a multi-billion dollar tobacco settlement. Under the agreement, tobacco companies agree to pay \$368.5 billion over twenty years, accept restrictions on their marketing and sale practices, and allow federal regulation of tobacco products. In exchange, all pending class action lawsuits would be dismissed and future class action and individual suits would be prohibited. Lott organizes the negotiations and works behind-the-scenes with the Clinton administration on the agreement. Soon after the deal is announced the administration wobbles in its support of it after critics charge it unfairly immunizes the tobacco industry from further lawsuits. (Lott, pp. 158-161; *1997 CQ Almanac*, pp. 3-3 to 3-5)

Lott decides to refer the tobacco settlement to the Commerce Committee and not the Judiciary Committee led by Hatch. He calls the Democrats on Judiciary "among the most liberal in the Senate." But Hatch introduces his own, tougher, bill (S 1530) and EMK introduces his own tough, anti-tobacco legislation (S 1492). Commerce (19 to 1) eventually approves a tobacco bill (S 1415) based on the agreement, with slightly higher costs to tobacco companies. But the bill goes down to defeat. Former surgeon general C. Everett Koop and former Food and Drug Administration head David Kessler lead the attack against the bill. Working out of an office provided by EMK, they call for greater penalties against the tobacco industry and weaker judicial safeguards against lawsuits. The bill is amended numerous times and the costs to tobacco companies increase \$148 billion. In the spring of 1998, the tobacco companies withdraw their support for the legislation and launch a major media campaign and lobbying effort against it. In June 1998, the bill dies after there are not enough votes to overcome a filibuster. (Lott, pp. 158-167; *1997 CQ Almanac*, pp. 3-3 to 3-5; *1998 CQ Almanac*, p. C-6)

November Lott discourages James Jeffords (R-VT) from working with EMK on a “patient’s bill of rights.” But Lott also warns the health insurance industry to “get off your wallets” if it expects Republicans to continue blocking the measure. (Clymer, pp. 595-596)

1998

July Senate Democrats filibuster a bill that would make it a federal crime to transport a minor across state lines for the purpose of avoiding parental consent laws. Lott calls the bill “high on our list of must pass legislation.” EMK opposes the bill. (1998 *CQ Almanac*, pp. 3-5 to 3-6)

December On the 19th, the House votes to impeach Clinton for high crimes and misdemeanors on two out of four accounts. Article I alleges that Clinton gave “perjurious, false and misleading testimony” about his sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky in the trial against him for sexual harassment charges brought by Paula Jones. Article III (which becomes Article II in the Senate, since Articles II and IV were rejected by the House) alleges that the president headed a “scheme designed to delay, impede, cover up and conceal” investigations into his sexual relationships with Lewinsky and Jones. (Clymer, p. 601; 1999 *CQ Almanac*, p. 13-3)

On the 23rd, Lott phones Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD) and tells him that they will have to hold a trial, but that he wants it to be dignified and short. Lott later recalls that “Republican Senators simply didn’t have the two-thirds majority necessary to convict Clinton and remove him from office. And we would never have.” Lott and Daschle speak regularly during the trial. (Lott, p. 178)

On the 28th, Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) and Thomas ‘Slade’ Gorton III (R-WA), coordinating their efforts with Lott, reach an agreement and put in writing a plan for a quick Senate impeachment trial. Under the Lieberman-Gorton plan, each side (the House Managers and the White House defense team) would have one day (combined) for opening statements, followed by one day each to present their arguments. The Senate would then have one day (total) to ask questions of both sides. The Senate would then vote on whether to continue the trial by calling witnesses, etc., and a two-thirds majority would be needed to prevent immediate dismissal of the impeachment charges. Though the plan receives early support from both Lott and Daschle, it meets quick opposition from House and Senate Republicans. They accuse him of “short-circuiting the trial” and “pandering to Clinton.” Lott withdraws his support for the plan, which is set aside indefinitely in early January. (Peter Baker, *The Breach: Inside the Impeachment and Trial of William Jefferson Clinton*, New York: Scribner, 2000, pp. 268-269; Lott, pp. 179-185)

1999

January

On the 8th, the day after the trial formally opens in the Senate, Lott and Daschle hold a closed door meeting of all the Senators to determine how to proceed. A day earlier Lott had failed one last time to resurrect the Lieberman-Gorton plan with the Republican caucus and the Republican House managers. Senators from both sides of the aisle fear the Senate will follow the House into what Robert Byrd (D-WV) calls a “black pit of partisan self indulgence.” The main issue of contention is whether House managers would be allowed to call witnesses. Phil Gramm (R-TX) argues that the Senate should not decide now on all the issues that may come up during the trial but rather begin the trial and deal with issues as they arise. He says that it would be unjust for the Senate to foreclose House managers from calling witnesses, but, on other issues, he says that the differences between the two parties are mostly trivial. EMK seconds Gramm’s motion and suggests that they resolve the witness issue down the road. Lott seizes upon this bipartisan agreement and calls for a vote. Lott later recalls that he “believed Clinton was guilty of both perjury and obstruction of justice, and that there was enough evidence to remove him from office. . . . I thought the President should have resigned.” (Lott, p. 177, 188-192; Clymer, pp. 601-602)

EMK, Gramm, Lieberman and Gorton are designated to hash out the details with Lott and Daschle staffers. After some tense debates in private, an agreement is reached and a 4 PM Senate vote is scheduled. The plan calls for a two week trial in which the House Managers would have 24 hours to present their case, followed by 24 hours from the White House defense, followed by 16 hours of questions for both sides from the Senate. After this, the plan calls for a vote on two contentious motions, one to dismiss the charges entirely, the other to call witnesses. The proposal seems to succeed precisely because it puts off the contentious issue of calling witnesses (most controversially, Lewinsky) until a later date. As EMK says, “We can get to second base together. Let’s worry about how to get from second base to home plate later.” With a 100-0 vote, the senators unanimously agree on this preliminary schedule for the impeachment trial. Though the agreement represents concessions from both sides, it is seen as more of a win for the Republicans. Rae and Campbell argue, “Some Senate Democrats expressed private annoyance that Kennedy had been so quick to support Gramm because they thought he gave away a tactical advantage held by the Democrats stemming from the Republicans’ fear of looking as partisan as their House counterparts.” Yet overall, EMK’s and Gramm’s collaboration is seen as a successful endeavor. (Rae and Campbell, pp. 134-135; Baker, pp. 292-293; Clymer, pp. 601-602; *1999 CQ Almanac*, p. 13-4; Lott, pp. 193-196)

The trial officially opens on the 14th as the House Managers, led by Representative Henry Hyde (R-IL), begin their three days of opening arguments. At the same time, Byrd releases a statement dismissing the need to call witnesses because the votes for conviction are not there and calling for a dismissal. “For all my work with Tom Daschle,” Lott later writes, “the Democratic caucus had

blindsided us.” Lott works to kill Byrd’s motion and the trial becomes a more partisan affair. (Baker, p. 431; Lott, pp. 198-199)

In late January, the Senate debates behind closed doors Byrd’s motion to dismiss the impeachment charges immediately and a Lott proposal to continue the trial and conduct depositions of key witnesses that would be videotaped and shown in the Senate and to the national public. Byrd’s motion to dismiss is defeated 43 to 54. Lott’s motion is approved 54-44. EMK votes yes to dismiss the charges and no to depose the three witnesses. Peter Baker notes that while others defiantly called out their ‘ayes’ in favor of dismissing the charges, EMK’s vote is given in a soft, sad voice. (1999 *CQ Almanac*, pp. 13-3, 13-18, S-5; Baker, p. 360; Lott, p. 200)

February On the 4th, after seeing tapes of depositions taken from the three witnesses, the Senate rejects 30-70 a motion by the House Managers to bring Lewinsky to the Senate floor as their key witness. EMK votes no to the motion; Lott votes yes. On the same day, the Senate unanimously (100-0) votes to admit the videotapes and transcripts of the depositions into evidence. (1999 *CQ Almanac*, p. 13-3, S-6)

Both sides present closing arguments on the 8th. (Baker, p. 432)

On the 9th, the Senate rejects 59-41 (6 votes short of the two-thirds majority needed to amend impeachment rules) an effort to open up Senators’ final statements and final votes on Clinton’s fate to the general public and the news media. EMK votes yes and Lott votes no for opening up the debate to cameras and the public. (1999 *CQ Almanac*, p. 13-24, S-7)

In his final statement (closed to the public) EMK urges the Senate to reject the articles of impeachment. He argues against conviction mostly on constitutional grounds, saying that the framers of the constitution “clearly did not intend the Impeachment Clause to nullify the vote of the people, except in the most extraordinary cases of great danger to the nation.” Though he agrees that Clinton intentionally “misled the country for many months” he argues that “nothing [Clinton] did rises to the high constitutional standard required for impeachment and removal of a President from office.” With EMK’s permission, his statement is printed as part of the *Congressional Record* for 12 February. (<http://www.australianpolitics.com/usa/clinton/trial/statements/kennedy.shtml>)

On the 12th, the Senate rejects both articles of impeachment against Clinton. Article I is rejected 45-55 and Article II is rejected 50-50. Ten Republicans join with all 45 Democrats to reject Article I. Five Northeast moderate Republicans join with all 45 Democrats to reject Article II. A two-thirds majority was required to convict on either article, though many conservatives were reportedly seeking only a ‘moral’ victory with a 51 vote majority on either article (which was not achieved). EMK votes not guilty and Lott guilty on each article. (1999 *CQ Almanac*, pp. 13-3, 13-21)

Also on the 12th, the Senate rejects a motion by Gramm to postpone indefinitely debate on a proposed motion to suspend Senate rules to allow for consideration of a resolution to censure Clinton for his actions. Although Gramm's motion is defeated 43-56, the censure motion is subsequently withdrawn by unanimous consent since opposition to Gramm's motion does not reach the two-thirds majority needed to amend Senate rules. EMK votes against Gramm's motion and Lott votes for it. Condemning the call for censure, Gramm says, "The motivation is clear. People want it both ways. They want to find the president guilty and not guilty at the same time." (1999 *CQ Almanac*, p. S-7; *The Washington Post*, 02/13/1999)

March/April Lott sponsors an amendment to the "Ed-Flex" bill (S 802) that would permit states to spend \$1.2 billion previously allocated (PL 105-277) for Clinton's plan to hire 100,000 new teachers to fund existing programs for the disabled. Generally speaking, the goal of the Ed-Flex legislation is to give states and local school systems greater control over the allocation of federal education dollars. However, EMK opposes this particular amendment as an unacceptable tradeoff between smaller classroom size and special education and motions to table it. His motion is rejected, 38-61, and the Lott amendment passes, 60-39, on March 11th. Following the amendment's passage, EMK states, "The Republicans have pulled an anti-education hat trick. They have effectively fought and defeated the guarantee for smaller classrooms...and have pitted disabled children against other children in local communities." However, when the Ed-Flex bill goes to conference, the White House threatens to veto the measure unless the Lott amendment is dropped. Anxious to pass a bill in order to bolster their education credentials, Senate Republicans quickly agree to strike the provision. Clinton signs the compromise legislation. (1999 *CQ Almanac*, pp. 10-12, 10-17, 10-19, S-12)

2000

May Lott pulls an Education and Secondary Education (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 making it a 50-50 split.

2001

January The Democrats regain control of the Senate for 17 days until Gore, who as Vice President has been the tie-breaking vote in the evenly split Senate, 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.

2001-02 Lott serves as Senate minority leader. (*Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress*)

2002

March The Judiciary Committee votes along party lines in a 10 to 9 vote to reject the nomination of judge Charles Pickering, a personal friend of Lott's, to a federal appeals court post. The Democrats filibuster the nomination to prevent it from coming before the whole Senate. Republicans fail to get enough votes to end the filibuster, falling 6 shy of the 60 needed. The debate over the nomination centers on Pickering's record on racial issues and his overall performance in 11 years on the bench. EMK votes against the nomination, saying the judge "does not have the temperament, the moderation or the commitment to core constitutional protections that is required for a life tenured position" on the appeals court. But the vote against Pickering also "exposed a whiff of retribution" as several Democrats complain of past Republican efforts to block Clinton nominees. The Republican-controlled Senate had rejected by vote or procedure 114 of Clinton's nominees. At the time of the Pickering vote, Senate Democrats had failed to schedule hearings for 8 of 11 of Bush's nominees to the Appellate Division. Lott threatens to retaliate. (*The New York Times*, 03/15/2002, 03/25/2002, 01/17/2004; Lott, pp. 286-288)

November The Republicans regain control of the Senate (51 to 48) in the midterm elections, returning to the GOP control of the House, Senate, and White House. EMK loses chairmanship of the HELP Committee.

December Lott is forced to resign as minority leader after making controversial remarks about segregation during a birthday party for former segregationist presidential candidate Senator Strom Thurmond (R-SC). (Lott, pp. 245-248)

2003

June

Rules Committee Chairman Lott and the other 9 Republican members of the Rules Committee approve a proposal from Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-TN) to reduce the number of votes required to break a filibuster to 51 from 60 to make it easier to hold votes for Bush administration judicial nominations. The rule change requires 67 votes to become effective and is therefore unlikely to be adopted. EMK speaks out against the proposal. He says: "There is no grave threat of persistent crisis which calls upon us to eliminate our historic respect for the rights of the strong minority among our colleagues." EMK arranges for historian Robert Caro, who wrote an influential book about Lyndon Johnson's Senate career called *Master of the Senate*, to write a letter against the rule change and meet with Senators to discuss the history of the institution. Lott and other Republicans suggest that if the proposal fails they could break the filibuster on judges by using the parliamentary power afforded the majority party in the Senate. The presiding officer of the Senate, who would be a Republican, could simply rule against the filibuster as a point of order and have his ruling upheld by simple majority vote. The Democrats label this tactic the "nuclear option" and argue it would bring the Senate to a standstill. In his book, Lott calls it a "constitutional plan." "Nowhere in the Constitution," writes Lott, "is a supermajority - - the sixty votes needed to break the filibuster - - recommended or even suggested for judicial nominees." (*The New York Times*, 06/06/2003, 06/25/2003; Lott, 288-289)

October

The Republican led-Judiciary Committee in a party-line vote (10 to 9) approves the nomination of Judge Charles Pickering, overturning the decision of the committee in 2002. EMK votes against. Democrats threaten to filibuster the nomination. (*Los Angeles Times*, 10/03/2003)

2004

January

Bush uses the congressional recess to appoint Charles Pickering to the federal appeals court. Pickering can only serve until the end of the Senate session, unless the full Senate confirms him. (*The New York Times*, 01/17/2004)

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.

After Republicans gain 5 seats in the Senate, strengthening their number to 55, but leaving them still short of a filibuster proof majority, Frist warns Democrats that Republicans will not allow Democrats to continue to block judicial nominations. Frist calls the filibuster "nothing less than tyranny of the minority." Between 2002 and 2004 Democrats filibuster 10 nominees to federal appeals

courts, while approving the vast majority of nominations. (*The New York Times*, 11/12/2004)

2005

May A bipartisan group of 14 Senators, including John McCain (R-AZ), John Warner (R-VA), and Robert Byrd (D-WV), strikes a compromise agreement ending a heated Senate showdown over the elimination the filibuster against judicial nominations. The seven Democratic Senators who take part in the deal agree to hold a vote on three of the five blocked judicial nominees and vowed that they will filibuster future judicial nominees only under “extraordinary” circumstances. The seven Republican Senators promise to oppose any changes to the filibuster rule. The agreement does not resolve what might happen if Democrats filibuster a Supreme Court nominee. Neither EMK nor Lott is a party to the agreement. (*The New York Times*, 05/24/2005)

2006

April The Senate Judiciary Committee passes the EMK-McCain immigration reform bill. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-TN) offers a narrower version of the bill, one with greater focus on border security, as a substitute. Frist asks Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), the Senate Judiciary Committee chair, to help find votes to break a filibuster, but the Frist substitution bill makes no headway. (*Sacramento Bee*, 04/03/2006)

May The Senate passes the EMK and McCain immigration bill 62-36, which contains provisions designed to tighten border security, such as ordering the deportation of illegal immigrants convicted of a felony or three misdemeanors and building a 370 mile triple layer fence between the U.S. and Mexico, and declares English the U.S. national language. It also contains a guest worker program and a path for illegal immigrants to become citizens. Lott votes against the bill. (*The New York Times*, 05/26/2006; *CQ Weekly Online*, 05/26/2006)

November Lott wins reelection to the Senate. (*Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress*)

The Democrats regain control of the House and Senate. EMK regains chairmanship of the HELP Committee.

2007

Spring EMK and the White House begin working with Senator Jon Kyl (R-AZ) to revive the Senate’s bipartisan immigration bill. Kyl and Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) had sponsored an immigration bill the previous year that was more in line with the conservative House immigration bill. (*The Washington Times*, 05/09/2007)

- May* Senate leaders from both parties announce they have reached an agreement on immigration that would toughen border security and create guest worker and path-to-citizenship programs. As a concession to conservatives, the plan would shift the U.S. visa system from family- to merit-based, in which a point system would evaluate visa candidates on the basis of job skills, education and English language proficiency. However, foreign born spouses and minor children would continue to receive preference in the allocation of visas. (*The New York Times*, 05/18/2007)
- June* Facing bipartisan opposition, the EMK-Kyl-Bush Administration-backed immigration compromise collapses when the Senate is unable to break a filibuster and move to a final vote. Both Kennedy and Lott vote for cloture. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) pulls the bill from the Senate floor for the second time this month. The press reports that the bill will not likely come up again before the 2008 presidential election. (*The Washington Post*, 06/29/2007; *Los Angeles Times*, 06/29/2007; *CQ Online*, 06/28/2007)
- December* Lott resigns from the Senate. (*Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress*)

TRENT LOTT FACT SHEET

Prepared by Mark D. Nevin

Miller Center, University of Virginia, 07/14/2008

Trent C. Lott (R-MS)

- Lott served in the Senate from 1989-2007.
- He served in the House from 1973-1989.

Senate Leadership Positions

- 1995-1996, 2007 Republican Party Whip
- 1996-2001 Majority Leader
- 2001-2003 Minority Leader

Senate Committee Service

- Lott served with EMK on the Armed Service Committee from 1989-1996.
- Lott served on Finance Committee and the Rules and Administration Committee from 1997-2007. He was chairman of the Rules Committee from 2003-2007.
- Lott served on the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee throughout his tenure in the Senate.
- He also served for short time on the Select Ethics, Budget, and Intelligence Committees.