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A TRIBUTE TO RETIRING SENATOR ERNEST F. "FRITZ" HOLLINGS

CONGRESSMAN JAMES E. CLYBURN

Ernest F. Hollings' entire career of public service, spanning almost six decades in South Carolina, has been one of vision and distinction. His thirty-six years of service in the United States Senate alone give him the distinction of being the longest serving junior senator in our nation's history. And now, after being our state's senior senator for only two years, he is retiring. Those of us who have spent a significant amount of our time in the Lowcountry of South Carolina have little trouble recognizing the intonations his tongue produces as accepted and effective speech. He will be missed sorely.

Fritz, as he is affectionately known, was born in the "great state of Charleston"—a city I called home for several years of my life. He graduated from The Citadel and went on to active duty in the United States Army, where he saw combat in World War II. He received a Bronze Star and seven campaign ribbons for his service in both North African and European campaigns. He returned home and graduated from the University of South Carolina School of Law.

Fritz Hollings was first elected to the South Carolina General Assembly in 1948 at the relatively young age of 26. Prior to that election, he was a trial lawyer. Throughout his public service career, Fritz Hollings has been a leader. After only two years in the state legislature, his peers elected him to the inner circle of leadership, and he served as Speaker Pro Tempore from 1951 to 1954. In 1954, he was elected South Carolina's Lieutenant Governor, a position he held for four years. He was elected Governor of South Carolina in 1958. This achievement made him the youngest Governor of our state in the 20th Century.

It was during his time as Governor that I first came to know Fritz Hollings. I was a student activist at South Carolina State College, challenging many of the state's policies and practices. Fritz was hard at work creating an atmosphere for the changes he knew were on the horizon. I saw in his words and deeds during those fascinating times that we were pretty much on the same page. But I believe that the hallmark of Fritz Hollings' governorship was the creation of our state's technical education system. It was the centerpiece of South Carolina's response to the changing dynamics of our state's workforce requirements, and its impact is immeasurable. It is a legacy of his stewardship that, in my humble opinion, will never be matched.

In 1966, Fritz Hollings was elected to the United States Senate where he has been tenacious in his opposition to our funding and spending policies and practices. He has been a member of the Senate Budget Committee since its establishment in 1974, holding the distinction of serving on that panel longer than anyone else. His

co-authorship of the Graham-Rudman-Wallace Amendment, remains a source of great pride, although the nation's adherence to its dictates was short-lived. I am convinced that our national budgeting process will remain problematic until something akin to the value-added tax system that Fritz advocates is adopted. Fritz Hollings currently serves as the Ranking Member on the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee and on the Senate Appropriations Committee, where he is the third ranking Democrat. He is also the Ranking Member on the Commerce, Justice and State Appropriations Subcommittee.

Although it was his Beaufort County "hunger tour" that received national attention and became the backdrop of his book, *The Case Against Hunger*, the forerunner to that event was his "poverty tour" of Charleston's eastside on which he was accompanied by Sister Mary Anthony, Director of Our Lady of Mercy Neighborhood House, and myself. These events were the catalyst for his co-authorship of the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program and prompted Governor John C. West to launch his 1971–1975 governorship with a similar effort in some of South Carolina's rural communities.

Fritz Hollings has been a visionary leader, a potent advocate, and a true friend. Our state and nation will not be the same without the presence of Senator Ernest Frederick Hollings, and I wish him and his lovely wife, the former Rita "Peatsey" Liddy, good luck and Godspeed.