

Biography of Senator Mary Landrieu

Mary L. Landrieu became the first woman from Louisiana ever elected to the United States Senate on January 7, 1997. With her 1999 appointment to the Armed Services Committee, Landrieu also became the first Democratic woman, and only the second Louisianian, to serve on the top national security panel.

In 1979, 23-year-old Landrieu was elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives, where she served on the powerful Appropriations Committee. After two terms in the House, she served eight years as state treasurer, finding innovative solutions for the state's fiscal problems, including responsible state debt limitations and investments for education.

Landrieu is a moderate Democrat who believes our nation can and should do a better job of balancing our budget and educating our children for the global challenges ahead.

Leading for Stronger, Smarter National Security

Senator Landrieu was on the Armed Services Committee just a few months when she brokered a major compromise that broke a five-year partisan deadlock, allowing the Senate to move forward with a policy for developing a National Missile Defense system.

"During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union held to the standard of mutually assured destruction," Landrieu said. "Now, we need to move toward the post Cold War axiom of mutually assured security."

Landrieu's amendment added language that made it clear the U.S. will pursue this strategy on two fronts: development and deployment of a national missile defense system to protect the nation's borders, and continued negotiations with Russia to reduce nuclear weapons arsenals. Armed Services is an important committee for Louisiana, which houses three major military installations and is home to one of the world's largest shipbuilders. The annual economic impact of the military and defense-related contracts on the state is more than \$6 billion.

A Voice For Agriculture

Senator Landrieu's appointment to Armed Services replaced her position on the Agriculture Committee. Still, she recognizes that agriculture is vital to Louisiana. While serving two years on the committee, Landrieu helped

pass a \$6 billion federal farm relief bill that provided more than \$50 million for Louisiana farmers ravaged by drought.

Senator Landrieu is a proponent of balancing the needs of farmers with protecting the environment. She has joined a bipartisan effort to ensure the health risks of pesticides are evaluated based on sound science, protecting vital pesticides from bans that would devastate the state's struggling agricultural sector. The Regulatory Fairness and Openness Act would give farmers access to the most effective pesticides, while protecting people from harmful chemicals.

"This legislation maintains high health standards, and at the same time, requires the EPA to make more fair and scientific evaluations of pesticides," Landrieu said.

Protecting Our Resources, Getting Our Fair Share

As a member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Senator Landrieu leads a bipartisan charge to bring an estimated \$300 million a year to Louisiana by redirecting a larger portion of federal off-shore oil and gas drilling revenues to coastal states. The Reinvestment and Environmental Restoration Act would represent the largest investment in the environment in decades, without additional taxes.

Since the federal government began collecting offshore oil and gas drilling revenues in 1956, it has taken in more than \$120 billion, keeping nearly 100 percent. Under this bill, 50 percent would be redirected to states to preserve coastlines and wetlands. Every state would benefit from additional funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Wildlife Restoration Fund and historic preservation.

"Louisiana and other coastal states have waited too long for their fair share of offshore drilling revenues," Landrieu said. The proposed formula creates fairness for coastal states that provide invaluable natural resources to our nation's growing economy. It is a fiscally prudent plan that invests revenues from a nonrenewable resource back into renewable resources for future generations.

Advocate For Small Business

More than 65 percent of new job growth in Louisiana in the past decade was created by small businesses, making it the backbone of the state's economy. As a member of the Small Business Committee, she has helped pass legislation that has reduced federal regulations and created tax relief for small businesses. In fact, her pro-growth, pro-business voting record in the 105th Congress earned her the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Spirit of Enterprise Award.

Building and Strengthening Our Families

Statistics on the overall health and well-being of Louisiana's children are among the worst in the nation. Thirty-two percent of children live in poverty, while more than 20 percent of teen-age girls give birth before their 18th birthday. In June 1998, Landrieu joined a number of state leaders and child advocates to launch "Steps to Success," a public/private partnership focused on ensuring all children at ready to start school. The initiative focuses on increasing learning opportunities for children from birth to age 3, the time when 90 percent of a child's brain develops.

Senator Landrieu also strongly supports an increased tax credit for families adopting special needs children. She would like to see the tax credit increased from its current \$6,000 to \$10,000. "Building families through adoption is a blessing for all. Children cannot raise themselves. Every child needs at least one caring adult in their life, but preferably two stable, loving parents."

Family

Senator Landrieu is married to Frank Snellings, and they have two young children. Born Nov. 23, 1955, she is the oldest of nine siblings and the daughter of former New Orleans Mayor Moon Landrieu and Verna Landrieu.