



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on July 19, 2010

Goodwin Named to Byrd's Senate Seat

A youth movement in the U.S. Senate? What might that be, John McCain with wings again? Olympia Snowe in go-go boots? Vice President and Senate President Joe Biden with a new hair transplant?

No, it's 36-year-old Carle Goodwin, appointed by West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin III to the Senate seat left vacant by the untimely death at 92 of Robert Byrd. Goodwin, who will become the youngest of the current crop of Senators when he is sworn in, is five years younger than Byrd was when he first arrived in the Senate in 1958.



"We pass this torch to another generation," said Manchin III (Roman numerals are important in dynastic politics.) It appears the torch skipped a generation, since Byrd was old enough to have grandchildren older than Goodwin. Byrd came from the era B.S., as in Before Sputnik. Eisenhower was President when Byrd came to the Senate. The entire federal budget was \$86.1 billion, considerably less than we are spending this year on the Afghanistan war alone. Alaska was just getting statehood. It's a shame Byrd never ran for President. He might have campaigned in all 13 colonies.

No matter how good a Senator he might become, Goodwin cannot fully compensate West Virginia for the loss of Byrd. No one who has not been Senator since Christ commissioned the apostles could. As the newest member, he will be last in line for everything, including, most importantly, the public trough. He will not be able to bring to ("Almost Heaven") West Virginia the level of largesse gained for that state by the late Senator, known as the Prince of Pork. The title hardly does Byrd justice. He was the Tyrannosaurus of Trichinosis.

Whether Byrd, who served three terms in the U.S. House before winning the Senate seat he held in perpetuity, came to Congress from the Roman Empire or Jurassic Park is irrelevant at this point. Had he lived long enough to serve the full length of his ninth Senate term, Byrd would not have had to stand for reelection (You wouldn't expect a man that age to run, would you?) until 2012. Now the Democrats will have another Senate seat to defend in a special election, to be held, most likely this November. But Goodwin is expected to run and, in a state that has only one Republican member in its congressional delegation, is the early and likely prohibitive favorite.

Byrd's passing has finally made a senior Senator out of John D. Rockefeller IV, a mere lad of 73 who had been aging quietly as the world's most senior junior Senator, an honor previously held by Sen. Ernest Hollings of South Carolina for a few score millennia until Strom Thurmond retired at 102. Any similarity between the U.S. Senate and a retirement home is most likely a coincidence. A retirement home is more productive.

Goodwin served on the Governor's staff from 2005 to 2009 and currently serves as a civil litigation lawyer based in Charleston. He also has worked on the Governor's advisory committee on judicial



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nominations.

"No one could even begin to replace [Byrd], nor can anyone hope to fill his shoes," said the soon-to-be Senator. "But what I can do, and what I will do, is try my best to simulate his work ethic and his commitment to the law, the Constitution and this great state," Goodwin said.

Some might question Byrd's commitment to the Constitution, though he cited it as often as it suited him, waving around a well-thumbed pocket version of the great charter. He was often jealous of the prerogatives of the legislative branch and warned against usurpations by the executive, most notably when the Clinton White House attempted to get friendly Senators to sign a petition saying they would vote against removing the President from office even before the House had even voted on impeachment. Byrd then offered what he called "a little friendly advice" to the White House: "Don't tamper with this jury!" the Senator warned in that familiar sonorous voice.

But Byrd is also remembered in one of those dying soldier scenes when he was wheeled into the Senate chamber early this year to cast a crucial vote in favor of the health insurance reform bill that has become the centerpiece thus far of the Obama administration's domestic agenda. What authority does Byrd's beloved Constitution delegate to the Congress or the President to meddle in the field of health insurance? What constitutional warrant did Byrd find for all the programs from which he derived so much pork for his state? Ask such questions of your U.S. Representative or Senator or candidate for Congress this year and chances are you will get the longest, blankest stare you have ever seen on the face of anyone who was not Al Gore.

In a statement Friday, Rep. Shelley Moore Capito, the lone Republican in the state's congressional delegation, criticized Manchin for appointing a close political ally to the Senate seat. "It is apparent that many elected officials, and particularly the person ultimately charged with calling a special election, have been more focused on political maneuvers to further their own political ambitions before fulfilling the obligations of their office on behalf of the people they were elected to serve," Capito said. "Based on the person chosen from the rumored field of candidates ... it is once again evident that political ambition was the key factor in the selection."

"I am thrilled with the selection of Carte Goodwin and I am thrilled for the people of our state that he is willing to serve us in this way," said Rockefeller, who has had no one to call him "Sonny" since Byrd died. "Carte has served West Virginia as an attorney, general counsel to Gov. Manchin and chairman of the School Building Authority - all while exuding great character, dignity and always keeping West Virginia families and the challenges they face each day at the very forefront of his thinking."

In other words, guard the public trough!



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