



Written by [Dennis Behreandt](#) on July 27, 2008

Former Senator Jesse Helms Passes Away on July 4

Senator Helms was a consistent and outspoken opponent of abortion, homosexual rights, communism, affirmative action, tax increases, and big government generally, and was instrumental in getting Ronald Reagan elected president in 1980.



In late August of 1983, Senator Helms was part of a congressional delegation bound for South Korea to observe that country's 30th anniversary of the United States-South Korea Mutual Defense Treaty, along with Senator Steve Symms of Idaho, Representative Carroll Hubbard, Jr. of Kentucky, and Representative Larry McDonald of Georgia. Helms, who changed his flight plans to attend a fundraiser, took a separate flight (KAL 015) from Congressman McDonald (KAL 007), but the two stopped in Anchorage, Alaska, at the same time. Senator Helms invited Congressman McDonald to join him on his plane, but Congressman McDonald declined. KAL Flight 007 was subsequently shot down by Soviet fighters near Sakhalin Island after apparently straying into Soviet airspace. Years later, it was Senator Helms who persuaded Russian President Boris Yeltsin to release the black box from KAL 007, which the Russians had long kept secret.

Although not always a completely reliable constitutionalist, Senator Helms — known to colleagues as “Senator No” — was probably the most conservative, pro-Constitution senator of his era and as staunch a foe as the communists, both American and international, ever faced. Beloved by his constituents, feared by his enemies as few true conservatives have ever been, Senator Jesse Helms will be missed.



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