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## **Press Conference - Washington, D.C. - Senator Frank E. Moss and Governor Calvin L. Rampton Endorse Senator Edmund S. Muskie as Democratic Presidential Candidate**

Edmund S. Muskie

Frank E. Moss

Calvin L. Rampton

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TRANSCRIPT

PRESS CONFERENCE WITH SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE  
ENDORSEMENT OF SEN. MOSS AND GOV. RAMPTON  
NOVEMBER 23, 1971

MOSS:

Gentlemen, we're pleased to be here this morning. I'm Sen. Moss, Gov. Calvin Rampton on my right and Sen. Ed Muskie on my left. Gov. Rampton is in Washington, where he serves on the local government advisory board to the President's Cost of Living Council--my titles may be a little scrambled, but that's what brings the Governor to town. The Governor and I have been discussing the prospects of the Democratic party in selecting its nominee for the Presidency in 1972, and we are in firm agreement as to who we think would be the best candidate for the Democratic party, the one who can win, and we thought it incumbent upon us, while we had this opportunity, to make this joint announcement today. It's our belief that Sen. EdMuskie of Maine would be the ideal Democratic candidate, that he has deep support in our state, and that we feel that we should support him for the nomination. Now, in so doing we want it made perfectly clear that we think there are other good candidates in the field, and they're personal friends of ours--most of them are in the United States Senate--who are talked of as candidates, and we don't say this to criticize or downgrade any of them, except we believe that Muskie offers the best opportunity for the Democratic Party to resume the direction of the executive branch of our government, which we think is very sorely needed at this time. So that is the reason we asked you to come together. We are delighted to answer questions. Of course, the Governor will speak for himself, but that is the basis of the press conference this morning. Governor, do you have any remarks before the questions?

RAMPTON:

I would like to emphasize this is no effort on the part of Sen. Moss or myself to bind any Democrat in the state of Utah to anything. We haven't even begun the delegate-selecting process here, and certainly I would expect that many of the candidates will get delegate strength from the state of Utah. This is purely a personal action on the part of the Senator and myself. I also want to emphasize this in no way indicates an unwillingness on our part to support fully any one of the other candidates should he be the nominee. All of the prospective candidates have been my house guests during the last few months, in fact, I understand George McGovern will be there today and is staying at the house tonight, at least I hope he'll still stay, he

knows that...(laughter)...George knows where I stand on this, I've made my position clear before. I join Sen. Moss in supporting Sen. Muskie for the nomination because of my high regard for Sen. Muskie, because I believe he would be the strongest candidate for the party.

ESM:

Well, I ought to say something in my own defense here. I'd like to say how much I appreciate this expression of friendship, which takes the form of political support. I understand, of course, that Utah, like the state of Maine, would not take dictation from its political leaders, and this is a personal endorsement, not binding on anyone in the state of Utah. As one travels this sometimes lonely road, it's good to know that there are good friends by one's side. I've known Sen. Moss, of course, for a long time. We came to the Senate together in 1958. It was my privilege at that time, because I was elected early in September, to campaign for him in his November election. I've known Gov. Rampton as one of the outstanding governors of not only his own state but of this country. And so their endorsement is something that I'm deeply appreciative of, and grateful for, and as I view the future I must say it's very persuasive.

MOSS:

We'll be happy to respond to any questions if any of you have questions.

Q:

Governor, what's the ----- of votes in Utah's delegation? What percent could you get to vote for Sen. Muskie?

RAMPTON:

That's very difficult to say. As I said a minute ago, we haven't even begun the delegate selection process. From talking to the active Democrats in the state I would reach a conclusion that probably more than half of them are favorable to Sen. Muskie's candidacy, and giving equal effort among all the candidates to get delegates I would think that that situation would prevail among the selection of the delegates. Both Sen. Jackson and Sen. McGovern have active groups in the state supporting them, and I would suppose that that would yield delegate votes. I'm sure it will, in fact.

Q:

Governor, you said that your endorsement of the Senator would not mean that you would be unwilling to support any of the other candidates....

RAMPTON:

Should they get the nomination.

Q:

How inclusive is that list of other candidates?

RAMPTON:

Well, I have four or five at least that have either announced or have indicated that they intended to do so. It would include certainly Sen. Jackson, Sen. McGovern,

Sen. Humphrey, and Mr. Mills. They are the only ones that I know about. Perhaps there are others.

Q: Mayor Iorty?

RAMPTON: No, I didn't intend to include the mayor. Well, yes, he slipped my mind. I'm sorry. I think he's slipped many other people's minds....

Q: -----candidate?

RAMPTON: What's that?

Q: Sen. Kennedy?

RAMPTON: Sen. Kennedy has clearly indicated that he is not going to be a candidate. He has many friends in the state of Utah, but we've taken his statement at face value.

Q: Sen. Moss, why do you think that Sen. Muskie is so great?

MOSS: Well, I landed side-by-side with Ed. Muskie in our Senate seats when we took them in January of 1959, and so I've known him very intimately during all of this time. We've served together on committees, and I've built up a great respect for him. Then I watched him as our vice-presidential candidate three years ago, and I thought his performance there was superb. He articulated the issues very well, and I'm sure he was a great asset on that ticket. And we fell a little short of winning, but Ed Muskie stood out, I think, and grew. And he continued to exert this kind of leadership to the point that he is recognized widely by the Democrats. I also --since I was running last November, or in November of '70, I recall his appearance on television on the eve of election, that was, I think, a very outstanding speech given for the Democratic candidates. All of these things have marked Ed as a viable, believable, solid candidate.

Q: Well, in comparison with the others, why do you think that he could win and the others couldn't?

MOSS: Well, I think that he is probably, or represents probably, the best blend of the elements that make up the Democratic Party. Now, both parties, of course, have conservatives and liberals within the party group and therefore the candidate that is most likely to succeed is the one that can have the widest appeal from the middle outward both ways. And I think of all the candidates, that Ed Muskie does that best. And he does it in a way that inspires confidence and action, I think, on the part of the Democrats.

Q: Do you buy that, Senator Muskie?

ESM: I've found Sen. Moss very persuasive this morning, in all respects. I--I'm not very good at beating by own drum in this respect, and I'm interested to get his analysis....He may be giving me some ideas.

Q: Sen. Scott noted this morning that neither you nor Sen. Humphrey nor Sen. Jackson was able to get to Miami and speak to the Labor convention...and he said that the planes....

ESM: I notice that he didn't make it either.

Q: He said the plane schedule was such that you could have made it down and still gotten back in plenty of time for the voting on the campaign bill--and implied pretty much that you were, maybe, deliberately staying away from Mr. Meany in the view of the controversy with the President.

ESM: Well, if Sen. Scott had given us in advance a precise timetable as to when crucial votes on amendments to the Pastore amendment might have come up, I agree that we might have been able to do that. But unfortunately, he didn't take us into his confidence, and we are under the impression that the Republicans could have called up amendments involving crucial votes at any time, from 9:00 until 5:00, and that we couldn't afford to let our guard down. I'm sure that Sen. Scott would have been delighted if there'd been that kind of absenteeism, which he might have exploited, but we weren't about to play his game.

Q: There was no intended...(unclear)?

ESM: Not at all. As a matter of fact we had hoped that Sen. Scott would permit us to vote finally on Saturday. So there would have been no doubt about our ability to meet our Monday schedule. Unfortunately he didn't see fit to cooperate with us and it was his lack of cooperation that forced us to cancel our Monday schedule.

Q: Sen. Muskie do you say...(unclear)?

ESM: Before we get into any other questions aside from this endorsement, I think we ought to explore those. I don't think that we ought to get Sen. Moss and Gov. Rampton involved in any discussion in my views on current issues. I'd be glad to stay a few minutes. If you're through with that subject, I'd be happy to take questions. Are there other questions?

Q: How long ago did you two gentlemen decide that you were in agreement about this?

RAMPTON: Well, I've taken this position for some while and I've felt that the Senator had a similar position but I would say we didn't discuss it jointly until a week or so ago when the Senator got home. At that time we did discuss it and found that our views were in accord on this matter.

Q: So that the announcement today simply is a matter of convenience in timing.

RAMPTON: It's a matter of putting it on the record at a time when I could be here.

MOSS: Thank you very much. Sen. Muskie has indicated that if you wish to ask him any additional questions he would remain but this will terminate the joint press conference and the Governor and I will leave at this time. Thank you.

Q: Are there any other endorsements such as this...(unclear)?

ESM: Now you wouldn't really want me to destroy whatever element of surprise I may be able to pull. You keep working at these things and hope they come out in due course. Now the question that I was...asked over here, yes....

Q: Will you support the--Mansfield amendment involving troop withdrawals?

ESM: I have a statement on that question that we will be issuing today and giving my reasons which I won't go into extent but I will not support it--the troop withdrawal amendment. I don't think that the general diplomatic situation with respect to the elements that I considered important earlier this year has changed that much. We are in contact with the Soviet Union in three important areas with respect to the possible reductions of tension in Europe and elsewhere and I think we should continue to pursue them. Another factor that I should mention at this point is that recently because of our unilateral action, the President's unilateral action, with respect to his economic policy in August, I think we have shaken some of the confidence that European allies have had in our leadership and I think we ought not to shake it further by further unilateral action with respect to reduction of troops in Europe. I think there undoubtedly is some fat in the \$310,000 troop level that we now maintain there, that it could be reduced, but I think it ought to be reduced only after full consultation with our allies and in the context of the possibility of mutual force reduction. I have a statement which I'll issue that will go into those...those points a little more fully.

Q: Senator, are you going to oppose cut-backs for the United States forces unless it's balanced by similar cut-backs in the Warsaw Pact forces?

ESM: Well, that's what I mean by mutual force reductions, yes. Now what the formula should be is something to be negotiated and I don't prejudge what that ought to be but I think that either it ought to be in the context of mutual reductions of the Warsaw Pact countries or it ought to be reductions after full consultation with our allies that's another possibility. But in any case I think it ought not to be simply a completely unilateral act on our part....at this time.

Q: Sen. Muskie, Sen. Scott said today that the President's giving very serious consideration with...to veto the tax bill because of the tax check-off provision. If the President does so, what would be your judgment of the chances of getting another tax bill?

ESM: Well, that's difficult to guess. I would think that such an action on his part would indicate that he doesn't consider his tax program as critical to the country's well-being as he would have liked to have us believe up to this point. After all, the Pastori Amendment is a relatively small part of the total tax package which involves, in the form in which it passed the Senate, something like \$45 billion dollars in tax cuts designed by the President, with some additional help from the Senate, to stimulate the economy, to provide jobs, and his spokesman on the Senate floor indicated their great concern about achieving that objective. Now there has been a party...partisan, largely partisan difference of opinion on the Pastori amendment which has been resolved by a vote of the Senate. It goes to the House and the House will decide whether or not it would take the Pastori amendment and if that judgment of the Congress is for the President, it would seem to me that he ought to sign the bill.

Q: Senator, Sec. Connally said that Mr. Meany's reception of the President last Friday was arrogant and boorish. Do you agree?

ESM: I thought Mr. Meany and Mr. Connally indicated a great ability to handle each other yesterday. I don't think I need to be a coat holder in that discussion. I don't regard that as one of the substantive issues of the day.

Q: You do not? This is the President's reception at the convention.

--more--

ESM:

A substantive issue, no. The substantive issues override that by a great deal in my judgment. For three years I have had to proceed through this politics of confrontation in many places in our society, on the campuses, in the cities and elsewhere. And as I consider it, I remember something Harry Truman once said, "If you can't stand the heat getout of the kitchen." It's not comfortable always to put oneself at the cutting edge of confrontation whether it's a labor convention, or a gathering of students, or a gathering of any other group of Americans who are unhappy with things as they are and I don't think it helps to attack, you know, anyone simply on the question of protocol or manners or what have you. I think that labor exercised some restraint. You can't exercise full restraint when you have 2,000 people unhappy about a President's policy. Thank you very much.

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