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Press Release - Muskie Says Southerners Must Be a Part of a New Coalition

Edmund S. Muskie

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MUSKIE

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FOR RELEASE

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MUSKIE SAYS SOUTHERNERS MUST BE A PART OF A NEW COALITION

Senator Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine) called Saturday for the Nixon Administration to drop its so-called Southern strategy because it has been "a disservice to the South and to the nation."

Instead, Senator Muskie added, "There is another strategy. It is a strategy of building a whole society. It is a strategy of crossing the borders which divide us. It is a strategy of working together to improve our schools, to provide adequate health care, to preserve the environment, and to create job opportunities.

"That has been the strategy of decent and responsible Governors--of Luther Hodges, of Terry Sanford, of Dan Moore and of Bob Scott."

Senator Muskie spoke before a dinner of the North Carolina Young Democratic Clubs at Wilson, North Carolina.

In remarks prepared for delivery, Senator Muskie said that in the fall elections, Southerners proved that they knew "how to reject false appeals...For examples, in the elections for Governor in Arkansas and South Carolina, in Florida and Georgia, the voices of reason and moderation carried the day."

What is needed, the Senator said, is a new coalition. "Southerners must be part of that new coalition. It will be a coalition of people--people who want an end to the war, people who want the right to live in livable places, people who want the opportunity to be employed and to be free of a crippling inflation, people who want to be treated fairly and with respect."

Senator Muskie criticized the Administration for failing to understand the needs of the people. For example, "they thought so little of the farmer's needs that they failed to send a farm message to Congress for the first time since the Hoover Administration. Is that all we can expect from the new Nixon?

"By these actions, the Nixon Administration has made one thing perfectly clear. Its policy toward the farmer is a policy of neglect."

The Senator added that "if the Nixon Administration does not adopt a farm policy which makes sense, then a new coalition will. We will build a coalition which cares about improving the farmer's bargaining strength. We will build a coalition which cares about protecting agriculture from an unwise concentration of ownership. And we will build a coalition which cares about making government respond to the needs of all the people."