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Press Release - Senator Edmund S. Muskie Announces Anti-Drug Hearings

Edmund S. Muskie

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FOR RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE:
Noon
July 2, 1971

WASHINGTON -- Senator Edmund S. Muskie (D-Me.) announced today that his Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations will begin joint hearings July 7 with the Subcommittee on Executive Reorganization on legislation to create a White House office to co-ordinate the Federal anti-drug abuse effort.

Senator Muskie said that the two Subcommittees will hear testimony on S.1945, a bill he introduced May 26, and S.2097, the Administration's drug bill.

Witnesses on July 7 will be Attorney General John Mitchell; Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, Elliott Richardson; and Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard, appearing as a panel.

"The purpose of these hearings will be to determine the best approach the Federal Government can take for solving the drug problem," Senator Muskie said.

"We are well aware of the frightening realities of the drug problem:

-- The 1,000 babies born each year in New York City as addicts, helpless heirs to the terrible pain of their mothers' habit.

-- Thousands of veterans exposed to heroin in Vietnam who are now carrying a horrible curse home to their families in our towns.

-- More than 100,000 despondent and dissolutioned people whose health and will and hope have been shattered beyond repair.

"We are also aware that the Government's response to this drug plague has been totally inadequate, that Federal programs and Federally assisted programs have reached less than two percent of the addicts in America," Muskie continued.

"It is my hope that out of these hearings will come legislation that will create the mechanism for sharing up the national effort against drug abuse. The Congress has no higher priority."

Muskie said the hearings will continue July 7, 8, 9, 12, 14 and 15. Other witnesses during the Subcommittees' hearings will include Doctor Jerome Jaffe, Director of the President's new emergency office to combat drug abuse; Representative James H. Scheuer (D-N.Y.), who introduced S.1945 in the House; and officials concerned with the drug problem at the Federal, State and local levels.