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## **Press Release - Senator Edmund S. Muskie Letter to Ralph Nader**

Edmund S. Muskie

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FOR RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 4, 1972

WASHINGTON -- Attached is the text of a letter Senator Edmund S. Muskie (D-Me) wrote to Ralph Nader in response to Mr. Nader's inquiry about the status of property tax hearings of the Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations, of which Senator Muskie is Chairman.

January 4, 1972

Mr. Ralph Nader  
Public Interest Research Group  
1025 Fifteenth Street, N.W.  
Suite 601  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Ralph:

I appreciate your letter regarding the Senate Intergovernmental Relations Subcommittee conducting hearings on Federal legislation designed to encourage reform of the local property tax system. Like you, I am frustrated that despite the acknowledged inequities of the property tax and the poor administration of that tax -- shortcomings we have both pointed out on numerous occasions -- the Federal Government has taken no action to encourage property tax reform.

The staff of the Senate Intergovernmental Relations Subcommittee has this year, at my direction, studied the property tax in preparation for the hearings we discussed 12 months ago. The property tax was one of several areas to which the Subcommittee devoted nearly all of its time during 1971. Revenue sharing and drug abuse control legislation, which were the subject of hearings and legislative action by the Subcommittee, were among the other areas of Subcommittee activity last year.

Neither the revenue sharing nor drug control hearings were, of course, anticipated a year ago when I, as Chairman of the Subcommittee, indicated my desire to conduct property tax hearings. However, despite the many months of Subcommittee work necessary on these other legislative matters, the staff has completed significant work on the property tax study I instructed it to undertake last Spring in preparation for hearings on that subject.

As you may know, the Subcommittee staff met on several occasions last Summer with members of your staff and with representatives of State and local government throughout the country and has looked into property tax practices in a number of States. Most recently, for example, the Subcommittee staff travelled to Southern California to investigate property tax practices there.

Mr. Ralph Nader  
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In addition to the extensive work the Subcommittee has completed in preparation for property tax hearings, we have hammered out what I believe is a constructive and progressive proposal for the Federal Government to encourage reform for State and local property taxation. I plan to announce details of that proposal within a few days.

The work of the Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations has been broad and thorough-going on the questions of revenue sharing, drug abuse control and the role of the Federal Advisory Committees in Government, a matter on which you gave important testimony. While much of this necessary work was unforeseeable a year ago, it has not interfered with our preparation on the property tax. As has been traditional in that Subcommittee, we have placed a careful development of a constructive proposal ahead of superficial expose, the results of which would have been illusory publicity rather than long-term reform.

Your help and that of your staff has from the beginning been helpful in this effort. I look forward to a continuation of that cooperative spirit.

With very best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Edmund S. Muskie