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## Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at Fundraiser in Tampa, Florida

Edmund S. Muskie

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# MUSKIE News

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## REMARKS BY SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE

### TAMPA, FLORIDA - FUNDRAISER

8:00 P.M., THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1971

I am happy to see you so enthusiastic tonight.

I know we will all feel the same way a year from now.

I know we will. . . because I know that we're going to win in 1972.

We're going to put a Democrat back in the White House next November.

And we're going to put Florida back in the Democratic column.

We're going to win because the workers of this country want to see prosperity in their paychecks instead of hearing about it in a television address.

We're going to win because the Democratic Party cares less about building speech material out of people's problems. . . than about building plans out of people's dreams.

And we're going to win because this Administration has lost. . .

It has lost the jobs of three million workers.

It has lost 14% of the value of the American dollar.

It has lost much of the respect of a world of nations.

And it has lost the trust of most Americans.

Trust is a delicate thing. It means hope. . . it means faith. . . but most of all it means believing. . . believing in a man and believing what he says.

That's what this country is all about. . . that's what holds us together. . . not an arsenal of nuclear weapons. . . not a record G.N.P.. . . not a satellite around the moon. . . but faith. . . faith in ourselves.

- more -

It's called democracy. And it isn't built by postponing programs. It isn't built by breaking promises. It's built by telling the truth.

I talk a lot about the politics of truth these days. . . not just because the truth is right, but because it is especially right in 1971. The American people have been through too much -- too much pain and disappointment -- to be conned anymore by promises which are not even worth the words which express them. Honesty is the only way to renew trust. And trust is what we need to forge an alliance in this country -- an alliance of the forgotten -- a coalition that will reach out and touch the lives and hopes of all our people.

In 1968, President Nixon promised this country full employment and price stability. But what has that promise meant to the five million workers who still scan the want ads everyday for a glimpse of hope? What has it meant to the elderly people whose incomes have been ravaged by soaring prices? What has it meant to the average income American, who has lost his grip on a secure and comfortable standard of life? It has meant three years of hearing that things would get better if we left them alone. . . three years of governmental inaction. . . three years of economic despair. And no speech on television can ever promise or deliver the prosperity which those three years have taken away.

In 1968, President Nixon promised this country a secret plan for peace in Viet Nam. But what has that meant to the twenty thousand American soldiers, the sixty thousand South Vietnamese soldiers and the countless civilians who have died there since he made that promise? We know what it means and we see what it means in the weekly body count on the evening news. . . and no political symbolism -- no rhetorical euphemism like "winding down the war" can keep the promise of peace for those who have died since the promise was made.

In 1968, Richard Nixon promised this nation an all-out war on crime. But that promise cannot disguise rising crime rates in almost every major city in this country since he took office.

In 1969, Richard Nixon promised this nation 26 million new housing units within a decade. But the number of housing starts actually declined from 1969 until this year.

In 1968, Richard Nixon promised this nation a new federally coordinated assault on drug abuse in the United States. But it was this Administration which opposed legislation to establish a national institute on drug abuse, opposed the Drug Abuse Education Act, and opposed Senate amendments to the Economic Opportunity Act for Community Drug Programs. Behind the promise was two years -- two years of opposition -- two years of broken lives and broken minds -- before any drug treatment or rehabilitation bill was even suggested.

In 1970, Richard Nixon promised this nation "the most far reaching and comprehensive program to save and enhance our surroundings ever submitted to the Congress." But the Nixon Administration opposed legislation to expand the rights of citizens to bring environmental suits and impounded almost \$700 million for environmental protection programs. The air we breathe and the water we see proclaim the difference between promise and performance in our environment.

And early in 1971, Richard Nixon promised burdened states and cities a new program of revenue sharing. But what does that promise mean now to the taxpayers of our cities, who still stagger under the weight of soaring property tax rates? What does it mean to citizens who still walk public streets hand in hand with the fear born of rising crime? What does it mean to children who still struggle to learn from overworked teachers in overcrowded classrooms? It means another promise broken, another program postponed, and another disappointment to cities and states which can endure few more.

It also means what all the other disappointments mean -- defeat for this Administration in 1972.

And that means hope for the American people. . . a people who deserve the simple decency of being told the truth . . . from our government and from each other. . . about our collective wisdom and our collective shortcomings. . . about the strength we still have and the tasks we must all face.

And the obligation to be honest doesn't end at the boundary line between Washington and Virginia -- it extends from the Everglades to the Oregon forests. . . from the California coast to the mountains of Maine. That's why Florida is the right place for me to state my unequivocal opposition to the Cross-Florida Barge Canal. And that's why I will support efforts -- here and in Washington -- to protect the wonder and the beauty of Florida's wildlife and surroundings.

Our people don't want to hear that we can instantly rid the world of poisoned air and water -- because they know we can't. But they would like to see the beginning of programs which will someday do so.

Our people don't want to hear that we can instantly create a world of peace -- because they know we cannot. But they would like to see an end to the war in Viet Nam.

And our people don't want to hear that we can instantly banish poverty from this land -- because we cannot. But they would like to see their government begin to shape a decent life for every American.

The American people are tired. . .

-- Tired of causes which lose popularity but not importance. . .

-- Tired of promises without change. . .

-- Tired of the fading hope that, maybe this time, someone who can do something will listen. Our people want results. And the Democratic Party is going to deliver those results. We cannot work miracles. But we can work. And in November of 1972, this country is going to have a President who will work to make change happen.

Sixty years ago, my father found in Rumford, Maine, a decent refuge from the oppression of Eastern Europe. He came at a time when the words and phrases which define the American heritage had long since been

trampled by overuse into tired cliches. But to him, they rang with the same fervor and vision which inspired their creation. . . for he had never heard these words before. And the heritage of my childhood Maine echoed my father's faith in America's dream. . . a dream which had carried a nation and my family to freedom.

In 1976, this country -- our country -- will enter its two-hundredth year. The President we elect in 1972 will lead the celebration of America's birthright. It would be fitting, if the years ahead could prepare us for that celebration by putting real meaning back into the words and phrases which herald our country's greatness.

This is the "land of the free" -- as much as it was when the first schoolchild sang the "Star Spangled Banner." Ours is a government "of, by, and for the people" -- and it will always be, as long as the people keep it so.

I know that they will.

I have seen it in the faces of Americans across this nation. I have heard it in their voices. And I have felt it every time our people are asked to respond to their best instincts.

Americans want the greatness that is our to inherit -- a greatness born in two centuries of democratic promise and democratic practice.

Americans want us to be better than we are.

Americans want a government which can build bridges between people . . . and over the walls we sometimes build between each other.

That is our goal. That is our purpose.

And that can be the only attraction of political life in today's America.

Let us seek victory together. . . and let us never forget what victory means.

It means fulfilling the promise of our first two hundred years. . . and it means facing the challenges of the next two centuries.

That is our country's mission.

And that is what we must win in 1972.

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