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## **Press Release - Muskie Urges Action on Electoral Reform**

Edmund S. Muskie

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# MUSKIE

Maine

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FOR RELEASE

IMMEDIATELY  
SEPTEMBER 17, 1970

## MUSKIE URGES ACTION ON ELECTORAL REFORM

Senator Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine) today urged the Senate to act now on electoral reform and to "stop the flow of words...the bickering...the regional hem and haw, the political twists and turns."

The Maine Democrat voted to cut off debate on the measure this morning but the cloture move failed, 54-36.

In remarks submitted to the Senate, Senator Muskie told his colleagues, "Let us emerge from this debate with a constitutional amendment that offers the citizens of America a chance to vote directly for their president."

"Then let the people and the States determine whether Congress has acted wisely. If they reject our proposal, we can return to our chambers and begin again."

"But now," Mr. Muskie continued, "let us act. And let us act fairly and consistently with out belief that democracy means trusting people not most of the time--but all of the time."

Senator Muskie said that "the present electoral system suffers at least 3 basic flaws that jeopardize the proper functioning of the nation's political process. These include:

"1. The havoc that can be caused by the fickle behavior of unpledged electors.

"2. The inadequacy of national election machinery that cannot guarantee a fair and smooth election result, and

"3. The potential danger of a 'contingent election' where a handful of members in the House of Representatives representing less than 25 percent of the population could completely stifle or obscure the election process."

The Senator said that electoral reform has passed the House of Representatives. "It has received the broadest possible support from a cross current of national interest groups. It has, off and on, had the support of the President of the United States.

"What more inducement does this body need to act?" Mr. Muskie asked.

In addition, he told the Senate that "the people of this nation want an election process that is fair. They want a system that offers each citizen one vote and lets each citizen cast that vote directly and unequivocally for the man he thinks should lead the nation..."

"When all the arguing is done and the shouting and debating diminishes, only one system offers that clear opportunity: direct election of the President."

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