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Edmund S. Muskie Papers

10-28-1970

**Press Release - Remarks Delivered by Senator Edmund S. Muskie
and Quoted Out of Context in an Advertisement Published by the
Committee for a Responsible Congress**

Edmund S. Muskie

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IMMEDIATELY
OCTOBER 28, 1970

REMARKS DELIVERED BY SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE AND QUOTED
OUT OF CONTEXT IN AN ADVERTISEMENT PUBLISHED BY THE
COMMITTEE FOR A RESPONSIBLE CONGRESS

Excerpts from a speech by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at Lawrence Central High School, Indianapolis, Indiana, September 11, 1968.

"...There is one point I would like to make in connection with this. That is, that slavery, whether of the spirit or of the body, or both, will not work as a means of bringing stability and order and harmony to any society. It is only when every member of a society has a real reason to believe that he can prove himself, and when his society makes that improvement possible, that we can hope ultimately for stability, order, harmony and happiness for the people of America.

"That is the nature of our task. I am sure that you can rise to meet the challenge. And, the thing to remember is that in the process, you have the God-given right to kick the government around. Don't hesitate to do so. Don't limit it to some faceless government. Those of us in public life can stand a little kicking around, too.

"You know, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes was once asked by what great principle his judicial opinions were guided. He said, "I have spent 70 years finding out that I am not God."

"That is not a bad lesson for Justices of the Supreme Court, or for members of the United States Senate, or for President and Vice-Presidents, or for individual citizens.

"No one of us is God, notwithstanding the fact that we are taught we were made in his image. We have just so much of the wisdom and the skill, the talents and the qualities of courage and persistence and perseverance necessary to play a meaningful role in our society -- whether or not they are used effectively is not for me to determine. It is not for anyone to determine but yourselves.

"So I challenge you to do so."

EXCERPTS FROM REMARKS BY SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE
UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE -- JUNE 7, 1970

Student dissent, in this academic year, has not for the most part been a blind opposition to the established order. It has instead been a challenge, which has made us begin coming to grips with the fundamental problems that confront us all... an end to war and a beginning of peace... an end to prejudice and a beginning of mutual respect... an end to pollution and a beginning of a more livable world. And the challenge has come from rich students as well as poor, from white students as well as black, from Southern students as well as Northern.

We can not afford to overlook the teaching across the country, petitioning us to save our environment... or the brotherhood of students at Yale, asking us to overcome the hostility between white and black... or the gathering of so many young people last month, urging us to restore sanity to our policy in Asia.

As an affirmation of what is best in America, student dissent, has not been a disease in the body politic. It has instead been a welcome sign of health... a sign that millions of young people would rather improve America than escape or reject her... that they would rather have America united than fearful and insecure... that they would rather be proud of America than deject and disheartened.