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Edmund S. Muskie Papers

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**Excerpts From Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at the
Cumberland County Democratic Meeting**

Edmund S. Muskie

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EXCERPTS FROM REMARKS BY SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE,
CUMBERLAND COUNTY DEMOCRATIC MEETING, SOUTH PORTLAND,
OCTOBER 12, 1961

Whoever said that "opportunity knocks but once" wasn't a politician. Those of us who are involved in politics know that opportunity knocks not once, but many times.

Eight years ago, this month, in October 1953, the future of the Maine Democratic Party was as black as it had ever been. And yet, within a year, we had elected a Democratic Governor. Within three years, we had re-elected that Governor, increased our membership in the Legislature and elected a United States Congressman. Within five years, we had elected another Democratic Governor, a United States Senator, two United States Congressmen, and a sizeable proportion of the State Legislature.

One year ago, we thought we were on the verge of victory. Within a month, we had suffered a defeat, in spite of an outstanding record, a splendid candidate, and an impressive program. By all the rules, the door of opportunity should have been shut and barred.

And yet, within a year, political writers and observers are talking about the possibility of a Democratic victory in 1962. Opportunity is knocking once again.

Why do we have such opportunities?

First, the problems confronting a State are never static. Each new problem requires choices to be made on the best means of solving it. Sometimes the choice is wrong. Sometimes no choice is made. In each case, an opportunity is created for the opposition.

It is obvious, today, that there have been enough wrong decisions and enough failures to decide to create solid issues for the 1962 campaign.

The second source of opportunity is the performance of our Party. I believe the record we built from 1955 through 1959 gave the voters in Maine confidence in the Democratic Party. The size of our vote, even in defeat, was proof of this.

Furthermore, our Democratic legislators in the 100th State Legislature, built a fine record of performance. They became informed on the issues, developed a program, worked together, and got things done. Their performance has encouraged respect for the Democratic Party and has given us another opportunity for service.

Finally, the citizens of Maine want strong leadership. Political promises and programs mean nothing until they are put into practice. They must be solved by leaders who are sensitive to the needs of the State and ready and willing to act.

In 1962, I am confident that the voters of Maine, will make their choice for Democratic candidates who will give leadership to our State.

These are our opportunities. Our success will depend on how well we identify the issues before our State, how well we devise programs to meet our needs, how well we do our work, and how well we make our choice of candidates. I am certain we will do our job well in all departments.

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