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## Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at Struthers High School

Edmund S. Muskie

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REMARKS OF  
HONORABLE EDMUND S. MUSKIE  
DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE  
TO BE  
VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES  
- - - - -

Struthers, Ohio

September 12, 1968

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REMARKS OF  
HONORABLE EDMUND S. MUSKIE,  
DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE  
TO BE  
VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

- - -

12:30 p.m.

September 12, 1968

Struthers High School Field House

Struthers, Ohio

- - -

1           **SENATOR MUSKIE:** Our good friend, Jack Gilligan,  
2 distinguished leaders of this great Ohio community, and boys  
3 and girls.

4           I am delighted to be here, and I suspect that my  
5 youngsters must be tickled to know that I am spending so much  
6 time in school these days.

7           (Laughter.)

8           I am going to tell them it is much easier to get  
9 you to come to one than it is to get them to do so.

10          (Laughter, applause.)

11          But, then, there is a difference. I am looking for  
12 votes of future voters, and they are not.

13          First of all, I would like to say that I am here  
14 representing one of the outstanding public servants and leaders  
15 that I have known in our country in my lifetime. The man I am  
16 privileged to run with, the candidate for President, Hubert  
17 Humphrey.

18          (Applause.)

19          Now, here is a man I have known for some ten to  
20 fifteen years, and I want to say to you young people that I  
21 don't know anyone in public or private life who likes young  
22 people, who understands young people, and who can get along  
23 with young people, better than he can.

24          In all of his life, he has been dedicated to making  
25 this a better country for you and succeeding generations of

1 young people to grow, to find opportunity, and to improve  
2 their lives.

3 He is a man that you can like and even love and sup-  
4 port, because you will find him reciprocating in every way.

5 Secondly, I am here because I am excited by a new  
6 young leader here in Ohio, your candidate for the United  
7 States Senate, Jack Gilligan, who came from virtually nowhere,  
8 politically speaking, last spring, to win a tough primary  
9 fight for the Senate and to make himself a formidable contender  
10 for that seat in November.

11 I speak in my capacity as Chairman of the Democratic  
12 Senate Campaign Committee, who intends to elect young  
13 Democratic leaders like that Gilligan.

14 (Applause.)

15 Now, I want to say something to you especially.

16 You know all of us who have been parents know some-  
17 thing about the capacity of young people to complain or to  
18 kick, or to resent authority, or to disobey. They have done  
19 this with me ever since my first came into the world some 19  
20 years ago, and I have learned to live with it and even to  
21 like it, unless it gets too noisy.

22 Now suddenly young people are doing the same thing  
23 out in public, not just around their parents, but about the  
24 way things are run in our country. Not just about their  
25 parents.

1 I don't find this astonishing at all, I find it  
2 quite natural. Adlai Stevenson, whom probably most of you  
3 won't remember, but who was one of the articulate leaders of  
4 our country in the fifties, once said this: "Since the be-  
5 ginning of time governments have been mainly engaged in kick-  
6 ing people around. The astonishing achievement of modern  
7 times is that the Western world has developed the idea that  
8 the citizens do the kicking."

9 That is the way it ought to be. This is our country.  
10 It is a country that was created for the vast mass of so-  
11 called common -- I would prefer to refer to them as uncommon  
12 -- people of our country.

13 It is dedicated to your interests, it is dedicated  
14 to your improvement, but more than that, it is yours to run  
15 and running it means something more than simply the opportu-  
16 nity to abuse the right to advance yourself. The privilege of  
17 running it involves the responsibility of running it in such  
18 a way that every American will benefit from the way you do  
19 your job.

20 It is as simple as that.

21 So it is a country in which you are privileged to  
22 kick the government around.

23 It is a country in which you are privileged to com-  
24 plain about the way things are being operated, but it is also  
25 a country which you are charged with the duty and responsibility

1 of using your heads, your hearts, your capacity for under-  
2 standing, to do what is best for everyone concerned.

3 That is what this country is all about.

4 All of the noise I have referred to, and the contro-  
5 versy and the fighting have to do with the fact that people  
6 don't think we are doing a good enough job, about keeping the  
7 peace, about improving the relationships between different  
8 kinds of people, about solving the problems of our cities,  
9 about cleaning up the air and water pollution in our environ-  
10 ments, about improving our capacity for getting around and  
11 moving around -- moving from one area to another, finding  
12 jobs in other areas, opportunity wherever it exists.

13 It is quite true that we are not doing as well as  
14 we would like to do in all of these respects. So it is quite  
15 right that you should criticize what we are doing. But there  
16 is another thing to remember, and that is this: We are doing  
17 an incomparably better job in all of these areas than we were  
18 doing eight years ago.

19 What we were doing eight years ago was the net re-  
20 sult of an administration of which the Republican candidate  
21 for President was a part. He is asking you to believe that  
22 the kind of leadership he provided in 1952 through 1960 is  
23 better than the kind of leadership you had from 1960 to 1968.

24 Let me give you just one simple comparison. In  
25 1952 to 1960, we had three recessions. You youngsters have

1 never experienced a recession which you remember. Well, re-  
2 cessions meant that in that period we lost \$175 billion of  
3 production. What does that mean? That means that because of  
4 those recessions, your parents were less able to provide for  
5 you, were less able to provide adequate educational oppor-  
6 tunities, were less able to provide decent housing, were less  
7 able to deal with the problems of pollution, were less able to  
8 deal with the problem of racial unrest and deprivation and  
9 discrimination.

10 Now, Mr. Nixon said, or he has to say, that that was  
11 good enough and that you ought to be satisfied to return to  
12 that kind of government.

13 Now, what would happen in the next four years if the  
14 kind of economic picture that we had in the fifties were to  
15 take over in the next four years? I am not predicting that  
16 it would, but if it did, by 1972 three million workers other-  
17 wise employed would be unemployed. \$150 to \$200 billion of  
18 income to our people would be lost. \$30 to \$40 billion in  
19 additional federal funds to support schools, health services,  
20 housing, sewage treatment plants, highways, would be lost.

21 Now, it is one thing to be for opportunity for our  
22 people. It is one thing to work for equal treatment of our  
23 people. But unless we have the economic base upon which to  
24 build people's lives, people's homes, people's jobs, and the  
25 public services of education and health, which are to important



1 to build the potential which is within every human being,  
2 then it is a lost cause.

3 Over the past thirty-six years, since I first en-  
4 tered college in 1932, the year when Franklin Roosevelt be-  
5 came President, the Democratic Party, whenever it had been  
6 in office, had shown this very realistic practical effective  
7 approach to the problem of improving the people's lives.

8 Whenever we had been in office there has been im-  
9 provement in our capacity as a society to provide better jobs,  
10 better schools, better health care, better highways, better  
11 public service, and a better future for our young people.  
12 That is what is involved in this election campaign.

13 You have two men running for the presidency, each of  
14 whom has a record in one of the two top leadership positions  
15 in our country -- Mr. Nixon from 1952 to 1960, and Mr. Humphrey  
16 from 1960 to 1968.

17 All you have to do is make the comparison, not in  
18 terms of what any political speaker tells you, but in terms  
19 of the improvements that have taken place in our lives over  
20 that period.

21 I don't know of any better test upon which to base  
22 your decision at the polls, on November 5, this year. I  
23 understand that a great many, if not most of you young people,  
24 have origins similar to mine in countries overseas, and that  
25 your forebearers came to this country for the same reason

1 that mine did, to find a better life.

2 Well, we have found it. We ought now to develop a  
3 clear understanding as to what and who made it possible. If  
4 you would look at all of these facts, if your parents will,  
5 I am not concerned about what the decision on November 5  
6 will be.

7 Now, one final word. When I was a junior in high  
8 school, I was a very reserved and shy youngster, and found it  
9 very difficult to get out and meet other people and to make  
10 speeches, and to discuss important issues in public.

11 Well, I had a wonderful teacher that year. She was  
12 and still is a Republican, although I suspect she has voted  
13 for me from time to time, who awakened our interest, that of  
14 myself and a half dozen of my friends in public questions.

15 Now, at that time I did not dream of a public career  
16 or a political office, or running for the Vice Presidency of  
17 the United States. But she did make it clear to us that life  
18 involved something more than a job and a home and a family,  
19 that it also involved being a part of the community, and the  
20 state and country, and that we ought to be interested in what  
21 is going on outside our own home, outside our own lives, and  
22 more than that, that we ought to try and do something about it.

23 Well, I hope you youngsters do. You have seen a  
24 lot of demonstrations and even violence and force connected  
25 with the determination of young people to do something about

1 what is going on in our country and in the world.

2 Now, in order to do that effectively, you have got  
3 to understand our system. You have got to understand how our  
4 governmental system operates, how our political system oper-  
5 ates, and you have got to know something about the skills of  
6 political action, the skills involving persuading other people  
7 to do what you think is right.

8 In our country, you don't force other people to do  
9 what you think is right, whether you are President of the  
10 United States or a citizen who aspires to office. Force is  
11 no answer to effective political action; persuasion is. And  
12 it does involve skill, it does involve persuasion, it does  
13 involve time and patience, it does involve hard work, and  
14 the expenditure of great amounts of energy.

15 There is no better place to begin than right now in  
16 your school years. I plead with you to do it, as I did, and  
17 as others have done, because in the America of tomorrow we  
18 are going to have more citizens participating in government  
19 at the local level, at the state level, and at the federal  
20 level, than ever before in the history of our country, if  
21 this system is to work.

22 So in my judgment, this election is going to be  
23 decided not in the selection of a President and Vice President,  
24 or Members of Congress or legislatures of governments, it is  
25 going to be decided in what each citizen decides he is willing

1 to do about participating in the work of our country. That  
2 is a decision you have got to make between now and November  
3 5, and as you consider that problem, may God bless you all  
4 and speed you on your way.

5 Thank you very much.

6 (Applause.)  
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