

The Harris Survey

Nixon and Kennedy Both Slip Among Likely Voters in '72

By Louis Harris

The political impact of the Chappaquiddick incident is that Sen. Edward Kennedy has come back to the field and today would run a slightly poorer race against President Nixon than either Sen. Edmund Muskie or Hubert Humphrey. However, Mr. Nixon leads all three 1972 Democratic prospects by a solid 9 or 10-point margin.

The results mask a rather dramatic decline in the political standings of both the President and Kennedy. From July 30 to Aug. 3, the Harris Survey asked a cross-section of 1,573 likely voters across the country this question:

"Suppose the 1972 election was between President Nixon for the Republicans, (Kennedy, Muskie, Humphrey) for the Democrats, and George Wallace as an independent. Who would you vote for?"

The answers:

	Aug.	May
Nixon-Kennedy-Wallace		
Nixon	48	46
Kennedy	38	37
Wallace	8	11
Not sure	6	6
Nixon-Muskie-Wallace		
Nixon	47	51
Muskie	38	32
Wallace	9	10
Not sure	6	7
Nixon-Humphrey-Wallace		
Nixon	48	51
Humphrey	39	33
Wallace	9	11
Not sure	4	5

These results show that

during the same period President Nixon has increased his lead from 9 to 10 points over Kennedy, but his 19-point lead over Muskie in May has been cut to nine points. Comparably, Mr. Nixon's 18-point margin over Humphrey in May now is nine points.

In May, Kennedy was a stronger candidate than either Muskie or Humphrey by 10 percentage points. Had he maintained this strength, he could have drawn even with Mr. Nixon by now. Thus, one measure of the Chappaquiddick episode is that it may have caused Kennedy to have lost 10 crucial points — a switch away from him of one voter in 10.

Each of the three Democrats would run different races against the President:

- Kennedy holds a sizable 52-to-38 per cent lead over Mr. Nixon among voters under 30, a 50-to-38 per cent edge among Catholics, and a 50-to-34 per cent margin among the least educated. His support parallels the voting pattern of his brother in 1960.

- Muskie's support is regional and is geared more to the affluent. He carries the East by 48-to-40 per cent and the suburbs by 45-to-40 per cent, both better show-

ings than either Kennedy or Humphrey.

- Humphrey wins among registered Democrats by 59 to 26 per cent, better than either Kennedy or Muskie.

Kennedy still draws more of the poor, the black and the labor vote than any of the three Democrats. Humphrey does well with the same traditional party vote. But Kennedy excites the young, while Humphrey does better with the voters who grew up during the New Deal.

Muskie appeals to the growing college-educated sector, spread across age groupings. He can bring more Independent voters to the Democratic column than either Kennedy or Humphrey. But has yet to excite real appeal among the blacks or the traditionally Democratic low-income voters in the big cities.

In an election, Muskie could turn out to be the strongest of the three, since Humphrey and Kennedy show little sign of reaching the affluent. Kennedy loses to Nixon by 58 to 30 per cent among the college educated.

This latest survey shows Mr. Nixon slipping in every region against Muskie and Humphrey, except in the South.

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