

Politicians Watching Elections For Clues

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Politicians are closely watching scattered off-year elections today for a clue to the impact of Watergate. They may not learn much.

Today's elections, headlined by gubernatorial races in New Jersey and Virginia and a mayoral contest in New York City, represent the first national sampling of voter sentiment since the eruption of White House scandals and is being viewed as a possible preview of 1974.

Since the 1972 voting, in which President Nixon buried Democrat George McGovern but failed to ruffle Democratic control of Congress and statehouses across the country, the nation has witnessed some of the most serious political scan-

dal of its history.

But in the meantime, Republican party Chairman George Bush has been leading his party in a campaign to disassociate itself from the White House crisis, arguing that guilty individuals in the Nixon official family should bear the blame, rather than innocent members of the party.

There are signs that Bush's work is paying off as financial contributions to the party are picking up again after a severe downturn earlier in the year.

So, the eyes of the political profession turn to today's broader testing with the assumption on the part of some that it will tell how much Watergate is going to hurt the party of the President. It probably is too much to ask.

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