

# Local Officials Disagree With Presidential Amnesty

By ALDAN T. WEINBERG  
Staff Writer

Sen. Charles McC. Mathias (R-Md.) reacted unfavorably Sunday night to President Gerald Ford's announcement that he has granted former president Nixon a full and absolute pardon for any criminal conduct during his administration.

"It has been my opinion that the law should take its course in the case of Richard Nixon as in the cases of others," Sen. Mathias said, referring to Watergate figures who are either awaiting trial or already serving Watergate-connected sentences.

He termed President Ford's decision "a very perplexing situation."

Sen. Mathias, who will face Maryland Republican voters Tuesday in the primary election in his bid for a second term, continued, "The usual time for an act of compassion is when all the facts are known and the record is complete. Then is the season for mercy from either the judiciary or the executive.

"I cannot predict," he said, reading a prepared statement to the News-Post over the phone, "the effect of this action on the pending Watergate cases, or on the public's right to know the full

Watergate story. I am convinced, however, that the nightmare of Watergate will end only when we are convinced that the system of justice in this country is functioning with equity in concert with our desire to be compassionate."

Other state political leaders expressed similar unhappiness with President Ford's decision. Maryland Democratic Governor Marvin Mandel, also up for his party's nomination Tuesday, reacted to the surprise announcement by calling on the former president to "tell the American people the entire story of Watergate."

"I feel now that former President Nixon is free from any fear of punishment or prosecution, he has an obligation to tell the American people the entire story of Watergate so the matter can be put to rest once and for all," Mandel said.

Mandel had not previously made public any opinions on whether Nixon should be prosecuted.

Attempts to contact Democratic Rep. Goodloe Byron, his opponent in the general election, Elton Wampler, or state Sen. Edward P. Thomas, a state Republican leader, were unsuccessful last night.

But Dr. Bruce Welch, Byron's opponent in Tuesday's Democratic Congressional primary, said he was "shocked and dismayed" at the decision.

"I am shocked and dismayed at Mr. Nixon's being pardoned without a full review of his case in the normal process of law," Welch said. "This makes a mockery of the rule of law and destroys much of the public confidence in the Ford administration. I hope that Mr. Byron will join me in expressing concern over this serious breach of public faith in our system of justice."

Dr. Virginia Lewis, chairman of the Hood College political science department and a sage

## AMNESTY

(Continued From Page A-1)

political observer, termed the decision "absolutely terrible."

"If the judicial process had gone forward, and if Mr. Nixon had been indicted and then convicted, then I think hardly anyone would have opposed a full pardon because then we would have had the facts and the case could be closed. But to pardon him for anything he may have done in office leaves the way open for the press to be accused of hounding him from office without justification," she said.

"I'm afraid a great many people are going to feel there are two ways of treating people: presidents or former presidents, and other people. This is unfortunate," Dr. Lewis said.

Meanwhile, local attorney Richard E. Zimmerman, a Democrat, said he felt President Ford has "turned from a potential statesman into a journeyman politician. The world will inevitably lose respect for the U.S. because of his decision."

Zimmerman expressed the increasingly common view that if Nixon is pardoned, all figures connected with Watergate should receive the same treatment. "Ford has done more to damage the Republican Party than Nixon and his inner palace guard could ever have done," the outspoken attorney said, adding, "Campaign contribution cleansing legislation will be set back another hundred years."

See AMNESTY, Page A-5