

# KENNEDY SEEKING KEY SENATE POST

Says He Has Humphrey and Muskie Support in Move to Oust Long as Party Whip

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 30 — Senator Edward M. Kennedy, in a bid for a leadership role within the Democratic party, announced today that he would challenge Senator Russell B. Long of Louisiana for the post of assistant Democratic leader of the Senate.

In an announcement that caught many of his Democratic colleagues by surprise, Senator Kennedy said he was making the move to help the Democratic majority in the Senate meet the new challenge of party leadership that had been thrust upon it by the Republican capture of the Presidency.

The immediate reaction among some of his colleagues, including some of his liberal supporters, however, was that Senator Kennedy also was seeking to advance his own political fortunes in seeking the Presidency in 1972.

### Cites Humphrey Support

In a one-page statement announcing his candidacy for the post of assistant leader, or whip, Senator Kennedy said he was acting "with the support and encouragement" of Vice President Humphrey and Senator Edmund S. Muskie of Maine, the 1968 Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate.

It appeared, however, that the Kennedy claim of support was somewhat more emphatic than would have been desired by his two potential rivals for the Presidential nomination in 1972.

A spokesman for the Vice President declined to say flatly that Mr. Humphrey was supporting Senator Kennedy for the assistant leadership, held by Senator Long since 1965.

The spokesman acknowledged that the Vice President had talked to Senator Kennedy—as well as Senator Long—about the leadership post. But

when asked whether the Vice President was supporting and encouraging the Massachusetts Democrat in his move, the spokesman said: "The nature of these conversations is private."

Senator Muskie, through a spokesman, acknowledged that he was supporting Senator Kennedy for the job. But the Maine Senator, in a statement, went on to challenge indirectly all the reasons of party responsi-

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bility offered by Senator Kennedy in seeking the whip post.

Senator Muskie said he had decided against seeking the whip post because this would have "diminished" his opportunity to help reorganize the Democratic party, to speak outside the Senate to "a national constituency" on major issues, and to tend to his legislative responsibilities, particularly in the area of environmental improvement and urban problems.

In terms of the clublike rules of the Senate establishment, Senator Kennedy's move was as bold as it was surprising.

### Given Little Chance

Among his Senate colleagues, Senator Kennedy was given little or no chance of unseating Senator Long when the Democrats caucus Friday morning, before the opening of the 91st Congress, to pick their leadership for the next two years.

A liberal in the populist tradition on such issues as Social Security, Senator Long has alienated many Senators by his maverick stands—such as in supporting Senator Thomas J. Dodd of Connecticut in general by his opposition to civil rights legislation.

In any showdown vote, however, Senator Long can count on two important political assets.

He is chairman of the Senate Finance Committee and thus in a position to win friends and votes by dispensing or withholding favors on tax legislation, and senators are usually reluctant to blackball an incumbent.

Since the vote will be taken in secret ballot in the caucus, Senators need not necessarily fear retaliation if they vote against Senator Long. But even in advance of the vote, Senator Long was relieved to have obtained enough commitments, including some from liberals, to reassure his re-election to a post that in the past has been one of more honor than responsibility.



United Press International  
**ANNOUNCES CANDIDACY: Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, is seeking post of assistant majority leader in Senate.**

In a statement welcoming the Kennedy challenge "in good humor," Senator Long noted that he had "received assurances of support from a large number of Senators." Aides in his office suggested the Senator had 39 or 40 votes among the 57 Democrats in the Senate—or far more than enough to reassure his re-election.

### TEXT OF STATEMENT

I have been in touch with most of my Democratic col-

leagues in the Senate, and after consulting with them I have decided to be a candidate for the position of assistant majority leader at the Democratic caucus next Friday.

I am seeking this office with the support and encouragement of Vice President Humphrey, Senator Muskie and many other Democrats in the Senate who feel that the results of the elections last November have obliged the Democratic majority in the Senate to offer sound and new legislation in the interest of all the people of the United States.

The primary responsibilities of the new occupant of this position are to assist the majority leader faithfully, to serve each Democratic member of the Senate equally and to inform them fully and fairly on all matters coming before that body.

With a new Administration, Senator Mansfield's responsibilities will be heightened. He will need the devotion and energy of an assistant who can involve himself more fully in presenting the Demo-

cratic attitudes on the issues that come before the Congress.

I have worked closely with most of the members on legislation of mutual concern. I have had the opportunity to be in touch with the problems of all regions of the United States.

Not bearing the heavy responsibilities of the chairman of a major Senate committee, I will be able to devote whatever time may be necessary to help make the work of the Senate more effective and efficient and to make the majority whip a better instrument of the will

of the Democratic membership.

There is, however, a more significant reason why this contest is being undertaken. Beginning in 1969, the Democratic leadership of the Senate will have a far greater responsibility than the efficient conduct of its own business. With the Republican party in control of the Presidency and the governorships 31 states, including six of the seven largest states in the union, it is to the Congress that the people of our country must look both for constructive cooperation with the party in power and for responsible dissent.

In the last election the American people asked for action on the pressing problems in their economy and in the search for peace. The problems of our urban and suburban areas are especially great.

In view of the close results of the election, the Democratic majority of the

Senate has an obligation to the 30 million Americans who supported our ticket and to the country to present the best possible programs in keeping with our historic role as the party of progress and change in the United States.

The leadership of the Senate must be willing to take up this challenge. There are many Democrats in the Senate who, I feel, could serve in this position at least as well as I, beginning with Senator Muskie. I have contacted many of those who in my judgment could best fulfill these enlarged responsibilities. They, however, have urged that I offer my candidacy.

I will do so on Friday, happy to abide by the results of the secret ballot of the Democratic membership, but convinced of the continuing responsibility of our party to offer hope and direction to the people of the United States.