

THE HARRIS SURVEY

Kennedy Standing Slumps

By Louis Harris

The net political impact of the Chappaquidick incident is that Senator 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, Nixon leads all three 1972 Democratic prospects by a solid 9 or 10 point margin.

However, the overall results mask a rather dramatic decline in the political standings of both the President and Senator Kennedy.

From July 30th to August 3rd, a cross section of 1573 likely voters were asked:

"Suppose in the election for President in 1972, it were between President Richard Nixon for the Republicans, (Sen. Edward Kennedy, Sen. Edmund Muskie, Hubert Humphrey) for the Democrats, and George Wallace as an Independent?"

Nixon-Kennedy-Wallace

	Aug.	May
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 Senator Kennedy, his 19 point lead over Senator Muskie in May now is 9 points. Comparably, Nixon's 18 point margin over Hubert Humphrey in May now is 9 points.

In May, Senator Kennedy was a stronger candidate for the Democrats than either Muskie or Humphrey by 10 percentage points. Had he maintained this strength, he could well have drawn even with Nixon by now.

Thus, on measure of the Chappaquidick episode is that it may well have caused Sen. Kennedy to have lost 10

crucial points — a switch away from him of one voter in every ten.

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

• Sen. Kennedy holds a sizable 52-38 percent lead over Nixon among voters under 30, a 50-38 percent edge among Catholics, and a 50-34 percent margin among the least well educated. His support closely parallels the voting pattern of his brother in the 1960 election.

• Sen. Muskie's support is both regional and is geared far more to the affluent sector of the electorate. He carries the East by 48-40 percent and the suburbs by 45-40 percent, both better showings than either Kennedy or Humphrey.

• Hubert Humphrey wins among enrolled Democrats by 59 to 26 percent, better than either Kennedy or Muskie.

Kennedy still draws more of the poor, the black, and labor vote than any of the three Democrats. Humphrey does well with the same traditional party vote.

But Kennedy excites the young people, while Humphrey does far better with the voters who grew up during the New Deal.

Different Pattern

Muskie's pattern is almost entirely different. He appeals to the growing college educated sector, spread across age groupings. He is able to bring more Independent voters to the Democratic line than either Kennedy or Humphrey. But he has yet to excite real appeal among the blacks or the traditionally Democratic low income voters in the big cities.

In an actual election, Muskie could well turn out to be the strongest of the three, since Humphrey and Kennedy show little sign of reaching the affluent vote.

This latest Harris Survey shows President Nixon slipping in every region of the country against Muskie and Humphrey, except in the South.

The problem for the Democrats clearly is how to combine in one man the mass charisma of a Kennedy with the sophisticated appeal of Muskie. For Nixon, now enjoying a still substantial lead, there are far more signs of softness, especially among the young and affluent, than was evident during his honeymoon period earlier in the year.