



# Political Future of Ted Kennedy

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IT IS POSSIBLE that what happened to Senator Edward Kennedy on a Sunday afternoon in the Boston suburb of Quincy could determine his political future — in Massachusetts as well as nationally.

By now, the facts are well known. Kennedy was jostled by a crowd of anti-busing demonstrators as he left a junior high school after delivering a speech. The crowd refused to let him reach his car: and finally surrounded by police, Kennedy had to walk several blocks to a subway station and take a train into Boston.

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THIS WAS the impossible happening to a member of Massachusetts' royal political family. Kennedys do not get pushed around in their native precincts. Small wonder that a Kennedy aide should remark bleakly: "He'll be reelected next year, but this time he'll have to work at it."

The issue is school busing. But Quincy's political significance is that most of the demonstrators were from East Boston, where there has been no busing of the kind that has sparked sporadic violence at other schools in the area. Apparently, anti-Kennedy sentiment has spread to voters who simply don't like the Senator, or his policies.

Thus, however one views the Quincy incident, it comes out bad news for Kennedy. Pro-Kennedy experts in Wash-

ington have been predicting that a deadlocked Democratic convention in 1976 will draft their man for the presidential nomination. That could still happen, but Quincy makes it not such a good bet.

Kennedy has declared he won't run and won't be drafted. In doing so, he may have permitted himself a mental reservation. Now Kennedy has to ask himself whether Quincy will go down as merely an isolated incident. A presidential candidate must be strong in his own state, and if the anti-Kennedy sentiment spreads across Massachusetts those Democratic leaders quietly planning to draft him for the presidential nomination will have realistic second thoughts.

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KENNEDY was upset after the jostling incident, but he stood his ground as an advocate of mandatory school busing to achieve integration. "I've taken a stand," he told reporters. "I haven't changed it. We'll have to let the chips fall where they may."

As an opponent of mandatory school busing merely to mix black and white pupils without regard to its adverse effect on both races, I find that statement admirable. One of the things the country sorely needs is politicians who will stick to their principles. But it is possible to admire Kennedy's firm busing stand and still find it foolish, impractical, and — most important — wrong.