

Impeachment Vote Aids Cohen in Maine Race

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BANGOR, Maine — When freshman Rep. William S. Cohen cast one of the six Republican votes last summer on the House Judiciary Committee for the impeachment of President Nixon, one angry bitterender wrote Cohen an explicit wish: "May 1,000 camels relieve themselves in your drinking water."

As one Cohen aide now recalls, "We thought we'd have to physically guard him when he campaigned" this fall for a second term.

But now, with the disclosure of former President's early guidance of the Water-

gate cover-up and his resignation Aug. 9, the voters of Maine's sprawling Second Congressional District are calling Cohen gutsy, free-



thinking and, by virtually all accounts, are about to send him back to Washington with a re-election vote of landslide proportions.

So confident of victory is Cohen that in a year when many Republicans are gasping for their political life, he is now shunning the potato fields and forest-lined roads of his home district. Instead, he is campaigning for Republicans Rep. John B. Anderson in Illinois and Sen. Jacob K. Javits in New York and talking to a young voters group in Michigan.

Some Maine Republicans are already envisioning a 1976 Cohen race for the Senate seat held by the state's most prominent Democrat, Sen. Edmund S. Muskie. Cohen won't say that he'll run against Muskie, but he does

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allow that "someday I'd like to be in the Senate."

"They respect my independence," Cohen said of his constituents one recent Sunday as he stepped off another of the 1,050 miles he says he has walked in his 26,000-square-mile district since first campaigning for the House two years ago. "I don't wear anybody's collar."

The apparent victim-to-be of Cohen's popularity is former Navy fighter pilot Markham L. Gartley, whose F-4 jet was shot down over North Vietnam by misdirected American fire in 1968, landing him in a prison camp for four years.

He is one of four former prisoners of war running for Congress this year and the only Democrat. The others—Republican House candidates David Rehmann in California and Quincy Collins in Georgia and Senate contender Leo Thorsness in South Dakota—are generally given fair to good chances of winning. Gartley however, has no illusions about his uphill fight.

"I'm behind," Gartley says. "I think there's a chance, but it is a chance."

One recent poll, commissioned by the Bangor Daily News, said Cohen had a 7-to-1 lead over Gartley.

Cohen's high political standing seems to stem in part from his frequent visits back home; until last summer's Judiciary Committee duties kept him in Washington, Cohen says he traveled to Maine four of every five weekends.

Clearly, the nationally televised debates and his votes for two articles of impeachment impressed the voters.



REP. WILLIAM S. COHEN
... independent image

But anybody still upset with Cohen's impeachment votes has nowhere to go in this election—Gartley was calling for impeachment last March.

As a result, when Cohen walked along U.S. 1 in the picturesque St. John River Valley last week, a few hundred yards from Canada, several Democrats who voted against him two years ago told him he has their votes this time.

In 1972, Cohen got 13 per cent of the vote from the heavily Democratic Franco-Americans in the valley in the race against home-area candidate Elmer Violette.

On his walk last week the boyish-looking Cohen, 34, dressed in jeans, a sweater and windbreaker, started out in 20-degree weather under a deep blue sky. Midway through the day's 16-mile hike, Violette's brother, Leo, wheeled his car along side Cohen and told him, "I'm going to vote for you. You did a good job on Watergate."

Down the road a bit, west of Van Buren, retired railroad worker Albert Lamore announced to Cohen: "I'm a Democrat, but you've got a lot of guts. You've got my vote."

Lamore explained the Gartley sticker on his bumper by saying that he was a local Democratic official and had to display it.

Cohen has compiled a moderately liberal voting record, winning a 52 per cent favorable rating from the liberal Americans for Democratic Action and a 27 per cent approval mark from the conservative Americans for Constitutional Action.

Among his votes, Cohen has favored U.S. troop cuts in Europe, opposed use of highway trust funds for mass transit and food stamps for strikers, for overriding Mr. Nixon's veto of a

minimum wage bill, for maintenance of national environmental requirements for the Alaska oil pipeline, and against limiting advocacy by legal services attorneys.

The vote against food



stamps for strikers, and three others perceived by the state AFL-CIO to be anti-labor, cost Cohen labor's endorsement for reelection despite favorable labor reaction to his impeachment stance.

Gartley says labor donations are funding half of his meager \$20,000 campaign

budget; Cohen expects to spend about \$75,000 but says if he doesn't raise that much he'll cancel last-minute advertising.

Two years ago, Cohen said, he wound up \$60,000 in debt, on expenditures of \$140,000, and didn't repay it until last May after a series of fund-raisers.

Gartley has stressed economic issues in his campaign, pointing out Cohen's anti-labor votes to union workers and telling television viewers in a campaign ad that "I'm damn mad" about the rising cost of living.

He has also attacked Cohen for returning \$750 in campaign contributions from Vice President-designate Nelson A. Rockefeller and his brother David, chairman of the Chase Manhattan Bank, but not \$2,100 Cohen received in earlier Rockefeller donations.

Cohen says the criticism is absurd and that he returned the later donations because they were received after Rockefeller was picked to be Vice President. As a member of the Judiciary Committee he will scrutinize the Rockefeller nomination.

But for the most part, Cohen and Gartley seem to agree on many issues. Thus there remains the perception of Cohen as an independent legislator in a year when politicians are held in low esteem by many disgruntled voters.

Laurette B. Thier, who lives in Maine's other congressional district, stopped Cohen on his walk and told him just that. "We admire you for the way you stuck up for your belief," she said. "Maybe we'll have a chance to vote for you sometime."

Cohen let the suggestion slide by without comment.



Ex-POW Markham Gartley: "I think there's a chance."