

Politicians in Massachusetts Doubt

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BOSTON, April 30 — Most politicians declined to comment publicly today on the potential impact of the Mary Jo Kopeczne inquest findings on Senator Edward M. Kennedy's political career in Massachusetts. Privately, however, many political observers expressed the opinion that Senator Kennedy has suffered only a temporary setback, is unbeatable in Massachusetts and may even benefit in his re-election campaign from a sympathy vote.

While this was the case in Massachusetts, they said, they could not assess the long-range effects on Senator Kennedy nationally in the event he becomes a Presidential candidate.

Mr. Kennedy was elected to the Senate in 1964 with a majority of 1.13 million votes.

He is seeking re-election in November, a course he announced last December following an outpouring of support from Massachusetts residents in letters, telegrams and telephone calls to the Senator and to newspapers.

This was in response to a television appearance by the Senator in which he offered an explanation of the automobile accident on Chappaquiddick Island that took the life of Miss Kopeczne, a 28-year-old Washington secretary.

He also asked the people of Massachusetts at that time for guidance as to whether he should continue his career in the Senate.

Senator Kennedy explained the accident again in an inquest conducted last winter in Edgartown, on Martha's Vineyard. In his report on the inquest, released yesterday, Judge James A. Boyle of the Dukes County District Court said that he questioned some of the Senator's testimony.

Senator Kennedy said yesterday that he rejected the judge's assumptions and planned "no further statement on this tragic matter."

However, some political observers here wondered whether he would be able to hold to this decision in the forthcoming election campaign.

The Boston Globe, in an editorial prepared for tomorrow's editions, said that the matter

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That Kennedy Is Hurt There

"cannot now be left where the events of the last few days have put it."

"This matter may be decided by the voters in November, possibly in a very emotional way," the editorial said, "and this is not the disposition that should be made of the court matter."

The Boston Herald Traveler said that Judge Boyle's findings "will hurt" Senator Kennedy "although his capacity for rebound should not be underestimated."

Josiah Spaulding, a former State Republican chairman who is seeking the Republican nomination to oppose Senator Kennedy in November, said last night that the accident was "not an issue with me."

"I'm running for the Senate," he said. "I am not running against Ted Kennedy."

The chairman of the Democratic State Committee, State Representative David H. Harrison of Gloucester, said, "The people will be the final judge. I'm confident they'll stay with Senator Kennedy."

The Boston Record American published today the results of a street poll and said that six out of 10 persons interviewed said they did not think the case would have an effect on Senator Kennedy's campaign for re-election.

Of 47 persons asked if they would vote for him if he ran for President in 1972, the newspaper said, 21 said they would not, 18 said they would and eight said they were undecided.