

Will Oppose Ellender in '72

McKeithen to Run for Senate

By ALLAN KATZ

(States-Item Bureau)

BATON ROUGE—Gov. John J. McKeithen has decided to run for the U.S. Senate and will oppose Sen. Allen J. Ellender in the summer of 1972, the States-Item learned today.

Associates close to the governor said the final decision to definitely run against Ellender was made early this week. The sources said McKeithen already has made the initial moves to bring together a statewide coalition for the Senate race.

Gov. McKeithen's second four-year-term ends in May, 1972. The Senate election is in August, three months later. McKeithen is reported to have told aides that so far as he is concerned, the race for the Senate will begin unofficially with the close of the legislative session today.

M'KEITHEN DECLINED PUBLICLY to confirm the report, saying he has no official announcement to make at this time. However, McKeithen has said to friends: "I think I

have at least one good campaign left in me."

In the past, McKeithen has spoken privately of running against Ellender but in public has issued mild disclaimers. Ellender is 79 years old and has served in the U.S. Senate since 1936.

A confidante of McKeithen's said that following passage of the governor's tax package through the legislature last week, the state's chief executive faced the question of whether he wished to remain in public life or retire and made the decision to make the race against Ellender.

A major factor in McKeithen's decision is reported to be the encouragement of both businessmen and a number of leaders of independent labor unions from around the state. A group of the labor leaders reportedly told McKeithen he could have their public endorsement against Ellender at any time of his choosing.

THE GOVERNOR ALSO IS SAID to have been encouraged by a number of his financial backers who urged him to make the race.

McKeithen, who has noted before that any race against Ellender would be "uphill all the way," has recalled in

private that only once in Louisiana history has an incumbent U.S. senator been defeated and the man who turned that trick was the late Huey P. Long in the 1920s.

The governor, who never has been a pessimist about his own political chances, is said to envision a statewide coalition of businessmen, oil and gas interests, organized labor, Negroes and elected officials to support his bid. In particular, he hopes to do well against Ellender in New Orleans where he carried every precinct against John Rarick in 1968.

McKeithen also is reported convinced that the recently passed tax package which he vigorously supported will not be a negative factor in a campaign against Ellender.

HE SAYS THERE HAVE BEEN many indications of statewide recognition of the need for added revenues for government and has cited to visitors a States-Item "man-in-the-street" poll conducted Monday which he feels indicated many voters supported pay raises for teachers, police, firemen, civil service employes and financial aid for municipalities. Along with the decision to run against Ellender, McKeithen reportedly also has tentatively decided he

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will remain neutral in the 1971 gubernatorial race to select his successor, at least insofar as the Democratic primaries are concerned.

Persons close to McKeithen say only a disaster of major proportions within his administration would be likely to cause the governor to change his mind about running for the Senate.

Another major factor in the decision is that McKeithen has seen polls that indicate he has not personally been hurt by the Life magazine articles charging Mafia domination of the state. The governor has told friends he believes the public is aware of what he believes are serious gaps and contradictions in the Life story. The governor also has said he believes many of the charges made by Life will be washed away if the state's \$10 million libel suit comes to court.

The governor recently told one group of backers his one regret is that he will not have time for a lengthy vacation after his term as governor expires but will instead at that time be deep into the campaign against Ellender.

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Vietnam Visit Set by Governor

(Special to the States-Item)

BATON ROUGE — Gov. John J. McKeithen disclosed today he plans to visit Vietnam next month.

The governor said he will tour the Orient at the request of the Port of New Orleans, International House and the Department of Commerce and Industry. "When there, I shall go to Vietnam on my own," McKeithen said.

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