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Senators Weigh Election Law Reform
to Bar Watergates

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WASHINGTON, June 6—Just down the corridor from the nationally televised Watergate hearings, another Senate committee listened today to appeals from several Senators for reforms in the Federal election laws to prevent future Watergates.

Among the proposals were those calling for the public financing of all Federal election campaigns, the creation of a permanent independent prosecutor for all election-related Federal crimes and limits on individual contributions and the

use of cash in political campaigns.

"Of all the lessons of Watergate, perhaps the one that is most obvious today is the lesson that money is a vastly corrosive power in American politics," Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, told the Senate Rules and Administration Committee.

"There could be no more powerful formula for compounding the cynicism of our citizens over Watergate than for Congress to ignore this opportunity to shut off the vast rivers of cash and contributions that flood our political system

in every election campaign," Mr. Kennedy added.

The committee began two days of hearings on a Nixon Administration measure that would establish a bipartisan election study commission and a bill already approved by the Senate Commerce Committee that would do the following:

¶ Repeal the equal-time broadcast requirements for Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates.

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¶ Replace the present selected media spending limit for Fed-

eral office with a limit of 25 cents for each person of voting age in the geographic area in which the election was being held.

¶ Create a Federal commission to enforce the bill, and require the approval of Presidential campaign expenditures in excess of \$100 by the candidates' national party committee.

Among those urging the committee to broaden the election reform bill to provide for public financing of Presidential, Senate and House elections were Senators Charles McC. Mathias Jr., Republican of

Maryland; Adlai E. Stevenson 3d, Democrat of Illinois, and Mr. Kennedy.

Mr. Mathias, who along with Mr. Stevenson introduced their public financing measure in the Senate today, said that "perhaps most important it would enable us to remove a large part of the corrosive influence of big money from our political campaigns and our governing process."

Senator Walter F. Mondale, Democrat of Minnesota, urged the committee to set up an office of Federal elections, to act as a "permanent indepen-

dent prosecutor" for all election-related Federal crimes instead of a commission to oversee the Federal election laws.

Senator Birch Bayh, Democrat of Indiana, proposed a requirement that all Federal employees earning more than \$18,000 a year make an annual disclosure of personal finances.

Mr. Kennedy urged an absolute limit of \$1,000 on the amount that any individual could contribute to a candidate for Federal office and "a flat ban on cash transactions" in political campaigns, except for transactions of less than \$100.