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Congressmen Get Watergate Fallout From Constituents

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The man from Lynchburg wired Sen. William L. Scott (R-Va.): "Suggest you speak out for clearing up Watergate affair. Appears to be a sorry mess."

Sen. Scott, staunch conservative and Nixon administration loyalist, did speak out this week, joining other Republicans representing the metropolitan Washington area who say they want the President to make a full disclosure of events surrounding the bugging and political espionage.

"The more you try to hide something, the more curious people get," Scott observed at a press conference.

Scott's Lynchburg correspondent ranks in only a small minority among those who write the senator about issues that concern them—he is getting now about 10 letters daily about Watergate, with the constituents overwhelmingly calling for a complete unveiling of the extent of the espionage.

Indeed, the only outpouring of mail to area congressmen and senators was reported by the office of Sen. Charles McMathias (R-Md.) after his Mar.

29 speech, in which he mentioned "breach of public trust" not only in Watergate, but in connection with the ITT-Chile incident and the nomination of L. Patrick Gray III to be FBI director.

But there is concern across the political spectrum over what Sen. J. Glenn Beall (R-Md.) describes as the "cloud" presented by the Watergate issue, a concern that it is a slow-burning fuse that could explode in the 1974 elections.

"We have to run in 14 months and we'd hate to run tomorrow," an aide to Rep. Stanford E. Parris (R-Va.) said.

There is far more mail in most area congressional offices protesting possible aid to North Vietnam, seeking enactment of abortion law, protesting rising rents and beef prices and the proliferation of X-rated movies than there is on Watergate.

However, there is concern among the senators and congressmen themselves, and among the politically active party leaders who look ahead and work to re-elect them.

"I think generally party leaders find this embarrassing," Sen. Beall said. "It's kind of a cloud over people's heads. People ask them about it. People kid them about it."

After President Nixon refused to permit his aides to testify openly on Watergate before a Senate committee, an aide to Rep. Joel T. Broyhill (R-Va.) said concern among Northern Virginia Republican Party leaders intensified.

"Before (that refusal), every body was saying that this isn't possible, that (news reports were) a fabrication," Tom Adams, the Broyhill aide said. Now, he said, the leaders, and Broyhill, want full disclosure.

Mathias' floor speech on public morality has brought in about 100 letters of praise not only from Maryland, but also from far-flung correspondents in Iowa and California, his staff reports.

Said one man from Baltimore: "Like many people I lack more and more confidence in the administration as exemplified by the first ITT case, the milk deal, the wheat deal, the Watergate deal and now the Vesco deal, the ITT in Chile deal and the Luxembourg ambassador deal."