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Kennedy

DETROIT AP - Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., arriving in Detroit for a Democratic fund-raising dinner Friday night, repeated his position neither to support a Democratic presidential candidate prior to the national convention nor to accept a draft.

"I have indicated I would support the Democratic nominee and I have no intention of supporting anyone prior to the convention," the Massachusetts senator said at an airport news conference.

He added that "even if there were a draft I would not accept it."

Kennedy called the May 16 Michigan primary important, but said the upcoming California and New York primaries were "critical." He said that "it would be very difficult for the Democratic convention to deny" the nomination to a candidate that took both contests.

The California primary will represent 271 delegate votes, while the New York contest would mean 278 votes. Michigan has 132 votes.

Kennedy's arrival, at the start of campaigning for Michigan's primary, sparked speculation about the senator's political plans. But dinner organizers said the invitation was long-standing and that Kennedy was "unaware of the political timing."

Meanwhile, a group of Michigan State University students began a campaign to win write-in votes for Kennedy on the Michigan primary ballot and spur a draft in Miami Beach.

"We think Kennedy is the only one who can prevent a big confrontation at Miami and pull the party together," said Christopher Thomas, leader of the effort.

State Sen. Coleman Young, a Democratic national committeeman, called the draft move "premature," and pointed out that voting machines virtually doom any write-in attempt.

At the \$50-a-plate dinner, Kennedy said the national economy was in trouble because "the Nixon administration is more interested in profits for corporations than for working men."

"The American people are seeking a President who is interested in ordinary working people and they're finding a President who is interested in the chairman of the board of ITT," Kennedy said.

He also called for improved industrial safety programs, citing 15,000 American workers killed on the job every year.

"We ought to oppose killing in American factories as much as killing in Vietnam," he said.