

## Senate, Public Stirred by Kennedy

Examiner News Services

WASHINGTON — Senate Democratic leader Mike Mansfield said Friday night after hearing Sen. Edward M. Kennedy's television statement on the Marth's Vineyard drowning incident that he wants his young colleague to remain in the Senate "because he has my confidence."

"He has made his case to the people and now the public is in a better position to make a judgment on the tragedy of last weekend, Mansfield said of Kennedy's dramatic broadcast appearance.

The Montana Democrat said the Massachusetts sena-

tor had been the "target of slander, innuendo and sly charges" since the accident which took the life of Miss Mary Jo Kopechne.

Random samplings showed the residents of Massachusetts were sharply divided over Kennedy's statement that he was contemplating resigning.

Kennedy had pleaded guilty earlier in the day to leaving the scene of the accident.

He was given a two-month suspended jail sentence and a year's probation.

"... I would understand full well why some might

think it right for me to resign," the 37 year old senator said. He comes up for re-election next year.

"I feel compassion for the Kennedy family and the senator and a deep sorrow for the Kopechne family," Mansfield commented.

"I want Sen. Kennedy to return to the Senate as assistant majority leader. He has my confidence," Mansfield declared.

Mansfield declined comment on whether Kennedy's political future has been harmed by the incident.

Sen. George D. Aiken (R-Vt.) said Kennedy should return to the Senate "the sooner the better for his sake. He'll soon find out whether he can take it. The pressure comes from within."

In reference to Kennedy's account of the accident, Aiken said, "I think he told the truth as he recounts it. The people of Massachusetts will have the final answer. He's

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up for re-election next year. The decision is his to make."

Aiken, dean of Senate Republicans, said he believed Kennedy had been damaged politically, particularly on his chances for a future presidential bid.

"They are not so good as they were. There are always those who will make the most of somebody's misfortune," he said.

Senate Republican leader Everett M. Dirksen of Illinois declined comment.

Sen. George S. McGovern (D-S.D.) said "I share Sen. Kennedy's hope that he will have the strength to put this tragedy behind him and to continue the brilliant career I believe history has marked for him.

"My heart goes out to him and his family as well as the family of the splendid girl who was killed."

Sen. Hiram L. Fong (R-Hawaii), a member of the judiciary Committee on which Kennedy serves, said, "I understand the man's very deep grief and would rather not comment."

Sen. Thomas J. McIntyre (D-N.H.), said he sent a telegram to Kennedy saying "We trust you. Stay with us." McIntyre added, "I meant that for the United States Senate."

The senator said he could not measure the political impact on Kennedy's future.

"The people of America have a big reservoir of good feeling for the Kennedy family," he said. "Knowing Ted, I just can't feel he is anything but a good man."

## Opinion Running High

Checks of major Massachusetts newspapers and radio and television stations showed opinion running high.

The speaker of the Massachusetts House, David Bartley (D-Holyoke), sent Kennedy a telegram saying in part: "I urge you to continue your work on behalf of all of us. Our prayers are with you."

Bartley also said he planned to introduce a resolution in the Massachusetts House Monday urging Kennedy to remain in office.

In Acton, a small affluent town about 30 miles west of Boston, Fletcher W. Burger, a baking company executive, said he supported Kennedy previously but would "think very hard before doing so again."

"If this had been my son or your son," Burger said, "things could have gone differently."

Kennedy, the only surviving son in a family that produced a President and another U.S. Senator, said he was not driving under the influence of liquor.

Appearing tense and several times swallowing hard, the senator gazed earnestly at the camera from the booklined library in the home of his ailing father, former Ambassador to Great Britain Joseph P. Kennedy, 80.

With the senator in the library were his wife Joan, his mother, Mrs. Rose Kennedy, and sisters Jean Smith and Pat Lawford, and his brother-in-law Stephen Smith, a close adviser. Following the 12-minute speech, Kennedy and his wife returned to Squaw Island for dinner.