

Gov. Connally NL Bjt 450

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AUSTIN, Tex. AP - Texas Gov. John Connally, who twice nominated Lyndon Johnson for president and who was wounded in the gunfire that killed President John F. Kennedy, announced Friday he will not seek re-election in 1968.

Connally's decision that he called "agonizing" cleared the way for a free-swinging governor's race and deprives Johnson of the help of the popular governor's name in the Democratic column of the Texas ballot.

The President's control over the state delegation to the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago might not be as strong without Connally in charge, but a delegate revolt by Texans is unlikely. It also jeopardizes the President's control of the state Democratic organization.

"I have reluctantly concluded that after the drain of what will have been eight years of vigorous public service, I no longer can be assured in my own mind that I could bring to the office for another two years the enthusiasm, the resilience, the patience that my conscience would demand and the state would deserve," Connally, 50, said.

The eight years included service as secretary of the Navy under Kennedy. He will have been governor six years at the end of his current third term which ends in January 1969.

Lt. Gov. Preston Smith announced his candidacy for governor weeks ago.

Reports circulated throughout Texas that an announcement he would run for governor was imminent from Sen. Ralph Yarborough, D-Tex, who three times lost the Democratic nomination for governor. But Yarborough said in Dallas Friday that he will not announce his intentions until Congress ends.

Yarborough is a longtime bitter political foe of Connally—a part of the ancient Democratic split in Texas between the liberals, now headed by Yarborough, and the conservatives headed by Connally.

Former Atty. Gen. Waggoner Carr, former U. S. Rep. Joe Kilgore, Houston lawyer Don Yarborough and former state Sen. Franklin Spears have been named in published speculation as possible aspirants.

With the popular Connally out of the way, Republicans would have their best chance in years to elect a governor. Former Atty. Gen. Will Wilson, who switched party labels, is a frequently named possibility, as is Rep. George Bush.

Connally, a longtime friend of Johnson and a force in behind-the-scenes Texas politics before his election, nominated Johnson for president at the 1956 Democratic convention and worked hard for his nomination in 1960.

Connally resigned in 1962 to run for governor.

Opponents called him "Lyndon's boy John" and asserted Johnson had sent him back to keep the state in conservative Democrat hands.

The governor was riding in the car with Kennedy when the President was assassinated in Dallas Nov. 22, 1963, and himself received severe bullet wounds. Connally placed Johnson's name in nomination for president at the 1964 national Democratic convention.

Connally and Johnson split temporarily that year when Johnson reportedly applied pressure to keep Kilgore from running against Yarborough, whose political feud with Johnson was patched over after the assassination.

While remaining on warm terms with Johnson, Connally has opposed some of his domestic programs.

One close friend of the governor said Connally's main reason for stepping down is that he could not support Johnson's domestic program as he would be expected to during the presidential campaign.

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