



## EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

### **Interviewer's Briefing Materials** **George McGovern Interview, 03/22/2006**

Robert A. Martin, Research Director

#### **Miller Center Documents<sup>1</sup>**

- George McGovern Timeline.
- George McGovern Senate Service.

#### **Secondary Source Materials**

- "McGovern, George Stanley," *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress* (<http://bioguide.congress.gov>).
- George McGovern, *Grassroots: The Autobiography of George McGovern* (New York: Random House, 1977) pp. 91-92, 116-127, 155-158, 168-169, 192-199, 222-224, 235-237.
- Jack Anderson, "Kennedy Loyalists Leave Ted's Ship," *The Washington Post*, 09/17/1969.
- Jack Anderson, "Kennedy May Help in California," *The Washington Post*, 05/26/1972.
- Jack Anderson, "McGovern Still Looks to Kennedy," *The Washington Post*, 07/11/1972.
- R.W. Apple, Jr., "Kennedy Is Pushing Hard to Aid McGovern's Drive," *The New York Times*, 11/03/1972.
- *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, "Democratic Candidates, McGovern and Shriver," (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1972) pp. 1045-1050.
- *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, "McGovern Committee Leads Fight against Hunger," (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1969) pp. 817.
- *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, "Efforts to Revise Food Stamp Program Fail," (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1976) pp. 607.
- *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, "Democrats Struggle Over Plank on Vietnam War," (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1968) pp. 1020-1021.
- *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, "President Nixon's Decision Sending Troops into Cambodia Provokes Widespread Congressional and Public Reaction," (Washington,

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<sup>1</sup> These are original documents created by Miller Center researchers for the Edward M. Kennedy Oral History Project. Please acknowledge credit for any use of these materials.

- D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1970) pp. 930-931.
- *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, “Fiscal 1974 Defense Supplemental,” (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1974) pp. 586-592.
  - *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, “Indochina War Ends: North Vietnam Victorious,” (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1975) pp. 295-300.

## HON. GEORGE STANLEY MCGOVERN TIMELINE

*Prepared by Laila Ouhamou*

*Miller Center, University of Virginia, 02/26/06*

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- 1957** George Stanley McGovern is elected to the House of Representatives where he serves until 1961. (*Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*)
- 1961** McGovern is appointed special assistant to President John F. Kennedy as director of the Food for Peace Program. (*Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*)
- 1962** McGovern is elected to the U.S. Senate from South Dakota. (*Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*)
- 1963** McGovern delivers a famous speech in the Senate, in which he becomes the first Senator to criticize the Vietnam War. (Robert P. Watson, ed., *A Political Life, A Political Legacy: George McGovern*, p. 57)
- November* Senator Edward M. Kennedy (EMK), who is presiding over the Senate floor when he learns that President Kennedy has been shot, asks McGovern to relieve him. (George McGovern, *Grassroots: The Autobiography of George McGovern*, New York: Random House, 1977, pp. 91-92)
- 1966**
- May* Speaking on the Senate floor, McGovern and EMK both criticize the U.S.'s China policy, calling for the recognition of China. (McGovern, p. 100)
- 1967** McGovern creates and chairs the Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs in the Senate. He serves on this committee until 1978. EMK also sits on this committee. (McGovern, pp. 168-169; Watson, p. 56)
- 1968**
- Summer* In the weeks following the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy, some Kennedy aides begin suggesting that McGovern should enter the presidential race to pick up the Kennedy delegates and continue Robert Kennedy's fight. (McGovern, pp. 117-121)
- EMK's brother-in-law Steve Smith tells McGovern that "I see no chance" of EMK entering the presidential race. (McGovern, pp. 120-121)
- August* On the 10<sup>th</sup>, McGovern declares from the Senate Caucus Room his candidacy for the presidential nomination. (McGovern, p. 121)

The first three days of the Democratic Platform hearings in Washington, D.C. are dominated by the Vietnam War. McGovern pushes for the party to adopt a more dovish policy at the national convention in Chicago. (*1968 Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, pp. 1020-1021)

On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, McGovern supporters and Senator Eugene McCarthy (D-MN) representatives propose a plank calling for immediate termination of the bombing of North Vietnam, as well as for the formation of a negotiated coalition government. (*1968 Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, p. 1021)

On the 25<sup>th</sup>, the plank proposed by McCarthy and McGovern is rejected by a voice vote in the Platform Drafting Subcommittee. The plank eventually adopted by the committee more closely resembles the Johnson Administration's policy. (*1968 CQ Almanac*, p. 1021)

On the 28<sup>th</sup>, debate ensues after the McGovern-McCarthy plank is brought up in the only roll-call vote of the Convention. Although the vote is close, the minority report filed by McGovern and McCarthy backers is rejected. The plank, however, is defeated by a relatively small margin—1,048 to 1,567. (*1968 CQ Almanac*, p. 1021)

Hubert Humphrey wins the Democratic presidential nomination. In a show of party unity, McGovern supports Humphrey's nomination at the convention. (McGovern, pp. 124-126; *1968 CQ Almanac*, pp. 1020-1021)

## 1969

- February* The Democratic National Chairman, Senator Fred Harris (D-OK), appoints McGovern chairman of the new Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection. McGovern is reportedly viewed as a moderate in the party respected by both reformers and party regulars. EMK, who is asked to name a commissioner to the newly formed body, selects Fred Dutton. (McGovern, pp. 134-136)
- March* On the 17<sup>th</sup>, McGovern launches his first major attack on President Richard Nixon's Vietnam War policy. Within the next several months, EMK begins calling for sizable reductions of American troops in the region. (*1969 CQ Almanac*, p. 1002)
- Spring/  
Summer* EMK attends the first regional hearing of McGovern's Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection in Washington, D.C. (McGovern, pp. 139-140)
- July* Following an appreciation party held for former members of Robert F. Kennedy's campaign staff, EMK drives his car off a bridge at Chappaquiddick, Massachusetts on the 18<sup>th</sup>. EMK does not report the accident, in which Mary Jo Kopechne drowns, for nearly nine hours. Many EMK loyalists begin pushing for the nomination of McGovern. (Adam Clymer, *Edward M. Kennedy*, New York:

William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1999, pp. 149-150; *Newsweek*, 08/02/1969; *The New York Times*, 07/26/1969)

Senate bill 2547 is introduced to amend the Food Stamp Act of 1964 in order to increase money allocated to the food stamp program. The final bill is passed and included provisions to: offer free food stamps for four person families with incomes less than \$60 a month, increase the amount of money allocated to the food stamp program from the existing \$340 million to \$1.25 billion in 1970, \$2 billion in 1971, and \$2.5 billion in 1972. It also provides that the cost of the food stamps should not account for more than 25 percent of the family's monthly income and allowed the Secretary of Agriculture to set national eligibility standards to be in the food stamp program with the stipulation that he could not set the standard below \$4,000 dollars per year for a family of four. S 2547 was passed by the Senate. The Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs is instrumental in the passing of this bill. (*1968 CQ Almanac*, pp. 817-831)

## 1970

*April* On the 30<sup>th</sup>, Nixon announces in a televised national address that U.S. and South Vietnamese forces launched an attack to destroy Communist sanctuaries in Cambodia. Nixon declares that the U.S. would "provide small arms and other equipment which the Cambodian army needs..." A United Press International poll reported that at least 50 Senators do not agree with the action in Cambodia. Both McGovern and EMK are in the group of senators opposing U.S. intervention. (*1970 CQ Almanac*, p. 930)

*September* McGovern introduces the Amendment to End the War (McGovern-Hatfield Amendment) that attempts to end the war by cutting funds. This piece of legislation sets the deadline for withdrawing troops by December 31, 1971. The amendment doesn't pass the Senate but is supported by 39 senators. EMK is one of the senators who supports the McGovern-Hatfield Amendment. (Watson, p. 57; *1970 CQ Almanac*, p. 392, 46-S)

## 1971

*July* HR 8866, better known as the Sugar Act, is voted on in the Senate. This act would have extended an act passed in 1948 for another three years until 1974 at which point the quotas for various countries would be reevaluated. HR 8866 was controversial because of an amendment introduced by EMK and supported by McGovern. EMK is not in favor of the bill passed by the House because of its allocation of sugar business to South Africa which is then practicing apartheid. EMK offers two amendments attempting to rid South Africa of American business and then dispersing their unused quota for countries more deserving. McGovern makes a statement in support of EMK's amendment stating, "American sugar producers including those in South Dakota and those laboring in the developing countries, will find it hard to justify this program of aid to South

Africa. They know full well the only beneficiaries of the South African quota will be a handful of large farmers who live in affluence...[Black African sugar farmers] produce only 2.8 percent of South Africa's sugar and would prefer to see us stop our policy of helping those who oppress them. The sugar quota for South Africa should be withdrawn." In the end, however, EMK's amendments are defeated by close margins (45-47 and 42-55.) (*1971 CQ Almanac*, pp. 481-493)

## 1972

- April* McGovern becomes the frontrunner for the Democratic Party nomination. (Clymer, pp. 186-187)
- May* EMK says he will endorse McGovern in the California Democratic presidential primary if it appears it will be a close race. EMK had previously been reluctant to endorse anyone. (*The Washington Post*, 05/26/1972)
- July* McGovern wins the presidential nomination at the Democratic National Convention in Miami Beach on the 12<sup>th</sup>. EMK introduces McGovern at the convention. (*1972 CQ Almanac*, pp. 1045, 1049)
- McGovern calls EMK to ask him to be his running mate. EMK turns down the offer and eventually Senator Thomas Eagleton (D-MO) is chosen and accepts. (McGovern, pp. 192-199; Clymer, pp. 188-189)
- August* After some controversy over Eagleton's mental health status, Eagleton withdraws his name as McGovern's running mate. McGovern again asks EMK to be his candidate for the vice presidency. Again, EMK declines and EMK's brother-in-law, Sargent Shriver, accepts McGovern's offer. (McGovern, pp. 192-199, 222-224; Clymer, pp. 189-190)
- September* EMK campaigns with McGovern, traveling through four cities. (McGovern, p. 235)
- November* On the 7<sup>th</sup>, in a televised address from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, McGovern delivers his concession statement. He states that "there can be no question at all that we have pushed this country in the direction of peace and I think each one of us loves the title of peacemaker more than any office in the land. We will press on with that effort until all the bloodshed and all the sorrow have ended once and for all. I want every single one of you to remember, and never forget it, that if we pushed the day of peace just one day closer, than every minute and every hour and every bone-crushing effort in this campaign was worth the entire sacrifice." (*1972 CQ Almanac*, p. 1034)
- McGovern becomes a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. (Watson, p. 56)

- 1974** The Nixon administration asks for a ceiling on funds for the Military Assistance Service Funded program in Vietnam to be raised from the allocated 1.26 billion to 1.6 billion. The administration argues that rising petroleum costs and inflation are the causes of the need for more money. Both EMK and McGovern issue statements that accuse the Nixon Administration of attempting to keep the war going with this increased military support rather than forging peaceful talks and negotiations in the region. When the bill goes to the Senate floor, EMK offers an amendment which would bar the use of funds appropriated to the Department of Defense for aiding countries in Southeast Asia. EMK and McGovern issue similar statements stating that the supplemental funds would continue hostilities in the same direction. The Senate first rejects a motion by John Stennis (D-MS) to table and kill EMK's amendment. They then approve the amendment by a 43-38 vote. (*1974 CQ Almanac*, pp. 586-592)
- 1976** With increased pressure from the Ford Administration to cut money spent on the food stamp program, Congress begins to consider revisions to the program. The authorization for this costly program is due to expire in 1977 so it is Congress' responsibility to make decisions on where the program is headed. Enrollment in the food stamp program grew steadily after 1971, going from 9.4 million participants in 1971 to 19.6 million Americans in 1975. Feeling pressure from both sides of the food stamp argument, Congress decides to make some changes to tighten eligibility requirements thereby cutting 1.4 million people from the program and giving more money to those with the lowest incomes. McGovern and Senator Robert Dole (R-KS) attempt to eliminate the purchase requirement for food stamps. This proposal, however, is rejected in committee. In order to pass the bill, McGovern and Dole drop the purchase requirement but add a substitute which changes the committee bill by helping to lower working families' food costs. EMK also adds his own successful amendment to extend for a year the agricultural commodities provided for on Indian reservations. The final compromise bill, S 3136, is then passed on April 8. (*1976 CQ Almanac*, pp. 607-618)
- 1978** EMK introduces the topic of airline deregulation to the Senate and it is debated and approved in one day. The federal government had been regulating airlines through the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB). EMK contends that this board was inflating the prices of plane tickets so that airlines would prosper. The bill calls for the CAB to promote competition within the airline industry, allow air carriers within certain limits to change their fares and routes without CAB approval, maintain subsidies to ensure smaller communities "essential" air service, and creates a new type of airline commuter service which would be almost absent of federal regulation. McGovern offers two amendments to the bill which he sees as having a negative impact on less traveled places. McGovern did not want small cities like those in South Dakota losing service because of the bill. His amendments, however, are both defeated. (Clymer, p.267; *1978 CQ Almanac*, pp. 498-501)

## **1980**

*February* McGovern flies to New Hampshire and speaks at college campuses to rally support for EMK. (*Washington Post*, 02/21/1980)

McGovern is defeated in his bid for reelection to the Senate. (*Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*)

**1984** McGovern unsuccessfully runs for the Democratic Presidential nomination. (*Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*)

**1998-2001** McGovern serves as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Agencies in Rome. As Ambassador, he proposes that the world's developed nations cut military spending by 10 percent in order to help alleviate world hunger. (*Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*)

**2000** McGovern is awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. (*Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*)

**2001** McGovern is appointed the UN Global Ambassador on World Hunger. (*Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*)



## **HON. GEORGE STANLEY MCGOVERN SENATE SERVICE**

*Prepared by Laila Ouhamou*

*Miller Center, University of Virginia, 02/28/2006*

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**Years of Senate Service: McGovern served three terms, 1963-1981**

### **McGovern Committee Assignments:**

Agriculture and Forestry Committee, 1963-1981

Interior and Insular Affairs, 1963-1972

Foreign Relations Committee, 1972-1981

Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs, 1967-1978

### **Committee Overlap with EMK:**

McGovern and EMK both served on the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs 1973-1978, McGovern Chairman: 1967-1978