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Duffey Announces Senate Candidacy

Text of Announcement—Joe Duffey—November 10, 1969 — 7:00 p.m. at Citizens for Duffey Headquarters, 924 Farmington Avenue, West Hartford, Connecticut

I am announcing today my candidacy for the Senate of the United States. This candidacy is NOT intended as a personal challenge to any individual. It IS intended as a public challenge to the kind of leadership and policies which have come to dominate our political system.

The tragic and wasteful involvement of this nation in the war in Vietnam occurred because of a mistaken foreign policy and a distorted sense of national interest and purpose. It also occurred because most of our elected representatives were indifferent until it was too late. Today, the great majority of Americans, both those who have spoken out and those who have been silent, want an end to this war. I do not believe that this conflict can be brought to an end until there is a change in the policies and the commitments of the United States, and not simply a change in our strategy. The President has at last indicated that there will be no real change in our policy in Vietnam. The continuation of this war is a daily humiliation to our nation, and a betrayal of our national honor. I run for the United States Senate to offer the voters of Connecticut a clear choice between the failing policies of the past two administrations and a real and honest change in our national goals and commitments. Until we have such a change, the war in Vietnam will continue.

I also run to challenge the timid silence of most of our political leadership in the face of mounting disorder here in our own country. We face a national crisis in housing, health care, education, and pollution of the environment. Our government spends more on war and preparation for war, than in all these other areas combined. In Washington and in Hartford, politicians conduct business-as-usual, while our cities decay and the poor revolt, and the air and the water become more hazardous. We spend more on tobacco than on education . . . more on pet food than on food stamps for the poor . . . more on chewing gum than on model cities . . . more on deodorants than on controlling pollution. I run for the Senate because this nation cannot survive without a change in priorities.

I run to challenge the continuing injustice in America. Not just in the case of the poor and deprived, but also in the case of many who still struggle in the midst of social and economic insecurity. We have built an economy in which profits seem more important than health. Despite much talk about tax reform, all prospects now are for a continuation of the gross injustice in our tax laws. The working-man and the elderly suffer most from inflation, but also from the surtax, and other measures this government uses to fight inflation. The rich are favored not only by tax loopholes and write-offs, but they also profit most from government subsidies. We do not hear much about these matters from those who represent us in Connecticut, or from those who seek to represent us. I will speak about these issues in my campaign. And I will do everything in my power to change the conditions that make these continuing injustices a part of the American system.

I run for the United States Senate because I believe that the question of who shall represent the people of Connecticut in this office is a matter of vital public interest, and not something to be settled among a few political leaders in Hartford.

The Senate of the United States is our nation's major policy-making body. Because of one vote in the Senate we are spending billions of dollars on the ABM, when the necessity and workability of that system has yet to be proved. Last week the Congress voted 20.7 billions dollars for Pentagon spending. It appropriated 415 million dollars for a fighter plane which the United States Air Force will never use. At the same time, 4½ million dollars has been cut from funds for cancer research, and appropriations for education, housing, and public transportation are being cut drastically. Every citizen in Connecticut has a stake in the question of who will represent them in the Senate. And every Democrat has a right to participate in deciding who will be the party's nominee for that office. It is because in the past we have allowed these choices to be made by the



cynical process of back room manipulation, that we have been represented so often by leaders who do not lead, spokesmen who are silent, representatives who do not represent.

I will seek the nomination of the Democratic party. But I will carry that quest to all the Democratic voters of the state. I will ask the help of all the members of my party in seeking this nomination. I will also ask unaffiliated voters to join the Democratic party to take part in choosing the best-qualified candidate.

I expect that there will be other declared candidates in this race in the months ahead. I will challenge those candidates to join me in carrying directly to the voters of this state the question of who will represent them in Washington for the next six years. The office is too important, and the issues too urgent, to let this matter remain a quiet, inside affair. I do not believe the voters of Connecticut will be asking in 1970 who has the official seal of approval of a few party leaders, but only who speaks most honestly and openly about the problems which affect the lives of all of us.

I will not, therefore, turn away from the challenge of primary elections, either before the State Convention, or after. This is not intended as a threat to the Democratic party. It is intended as a PROMISE to all those who want a change, and who want it next year.

I do not believe the United States can continue on the course it had followed in the past decade. There is a struggle going on for the future of this nation. It is today more a struggle between concern and complacency, than between change and reaction. I believe that struggle can unite young and old, advantaged and disadvantaged, Black and White. It will not be easy. Changing history is never easy. But seeking to change the course of this nation, both with respect to its policies and programs at home and abroad is the most important work any of us can be doing today.....not only for our own sake, but for the sake of our children. In the hope that such change is possible, in the belief that it is urgent, I ask your help.

DUFFEY TO SPEAK
TONITE 8:30 SO. CAFE
PBOG