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Democratic Senatorial Primary

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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May 24, 1960

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

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When I was asked today about reports that I was actively supporting candidates in the Democratic Senatorial Primary, I stated that my position was, as I had previously announced in two public statements on February 23, 1960, when Senator Murray made his announcement that he would run for re-election and March 18, 1960, when Congressman Metcalf announced that he would run for the Senate. These statements, as released to the press on those dates, read as follows:

February 23, 1960.

"I have worked closely with Senator Murray for the past 18 years in Congress, and very closely over the past seven years in the Senate.

"We have always worked together in behalf of what we considered the best interests of Montana and the nation. He has been a loyal and true friend. I will support him to the best of my ability."

March 18, 1960.

"I am sure that Congressman Metcalf had a difficult time making his decision as to what office he would run for. As I have said many times, both in Montana and in Washington, he is the best Congressman ever to come out of Montana. Before making his decision, he did inform Senator Murray and me that he had this matter under consideration.

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"My statement when Senator Murray announced still holds--that I will support him to the very best of my ability."

During the time I had been an active member of the Democratic Party and an elected representative of the people of Montana, I have felt that public endorsement of primary candidates was generally unwise and detrimental to party solidarity. I have made only one exception to that principle. It is my profound belief that the voters of Montana are highly intelligent people and that they can and will select their candidates on the basis of their records. This is the only way they should be judged.

The people of Montana will make their choice based on their own judgment and I am sure with the interest of our state and nation at heart.

P.S.

I have received one letter from a Democratic Senatorial candidate some two weeks or so ago and in effect I gave him the same answer as the above.