

W.H. Thompson's Residence

Mr. Robert Coates
California Democratic State Central Committee
447 Sutter Street
San Francisco, California 94108
Dear Bob:

(orig. 3 on plain bond)
I would like to send you my thoughts ^{at this point} on the HHHH campaign. If you find them worthy, please use them.

The ~~the~~ popular tide for Kennedy ^{appears to be} rising. My sources of information in Indiana and Nebraska, which granted are third-hand, nevertheless tell me that he is getting ~~to~~ across popular sentiment as a serious guy who ~~is going to do~~ can do something about our problems. The people are receptive because they do not believe the Administration's and its policies and programs are the answer. On the contrary, they feel they have not worked.

So long as Bobby was being obviously divisive, the politics of "unity" and "joy" were responsive. I do not believe that they can continue to be the ~~sole~~ ^{sole} central themes, and I'm afraid that HHHH will be overwhelmed by the tide if he continues to stand on the Administration's record. He has got to move ~~out~~ beyond it, otherwise he will be trapped the way Nixon

was in 1960. In fact, Bobby is now sounding almost ~~exactly~~ ^{indeed} like Jack in 1960 and HHH, ^{indeed} like the Nixon of that campaign.

The problem is how to do this in a constructive way which does not appear to be cheap politicking. I would suggest the following.

HHH declares, ~~supported~~ ~~by the President~~ that ~~there~~ ~~is~~ he feels it essential for himself ~~as~~ as a candidate to have first-hand contact with, to talk to the American people to know what they think the problems are and what should be done about them. He is therefore scheduling in major cities ~~for~~ over the next months a ~~wide~~ series of ^{"town meetings"} ~~Presidential~~ ~~sessions~~ where he will hold a wide-open discussion for two days with the American people. Where he will talk with them directly about their problems, know from them ~~the~~ what ~~can~~ they think can and should be done and regardless of whether he wins or loses the ~~election~~

nomination, he will use this knowledge to help in shaping the platform of his party and in improving the operations of the Government in the waning months of his service as Vice President.

He can say that some of the happiest ~~days at~~ and most productive days of his life were spent in working with people in the streets of Minneapolis as Mayor and he wants to ^{go} back to the streets to better understand the people's problems. He can also say that he wants to give the American people a chance to ask him first hand about the importance of our role in ^{helping to} maintain World Peace and how he thinks we ^{can} continue to ^{best} fulfill that role, looking beyond Vietnam.

Such a ~~program~~ ^{program} of "town meetings" ^{and this could be kept} would give him the continuing media coverage he needs while counteracting the image which the ~~the~~ ^{the} Kennedy ~~family~~ ^{crowd} are hanging him of ~~as~~ a leader ~~by~~ no longer in step with

attached to this statement about the
Pres. Kennedy's original intent
no doubt about which appeared in the 17 May Washington Post

the times, ~~and problems~~ out of
touch with our problems
and standing for the status
quo. ~~My gut reaction!~~

My gut reaction is that
people are not interested in
his liberal record. They want
to know ~~what is he going to~~
~~do about our~~ whether he
is going to lean on the past;
or, ~~too~~ do something new
about our problems which
past policies have not solved.

Maybe I'm off-base
but I don't think so. I
don't know if ~~my~~ ^{this} idea is
workable but something ought
to be done before he arrives
at the Convention with ~~such~~
a host, enough but not quite
enough, delegates for a first
ballot victory and then gets
rolled under by a Willie-
like stampede for Bobby.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

~~The~~ Also ~~is~~ attached is the latest
Evans Novak analysis - looks like some-
body is trying to smoke you out.