

# Kennedy and Ribicoff Both Won in Losing



**SHARE PLATFORM** — President Kennedy and Welfare believes New York Gov. Nelson shares platform with Abraham A. Ribicoff Rockefeller will be "handily" beaten by Kennedy in 1964. (UPI)

**By HALE MONTGOMERY**  
United Press International  
Washington — John Kennedy is something new. He will bring vigor and youth to our campaign. Therefore, I give you Jack Kennedy as the next vice president of the United States.

That was back in August, 1956, amid the din of the Democratic national convention in Chicago. The speaker was the photogenic governor of Connecticut, Abraham A. Ribicoff.

Kennedy lost the vice presidential nomination on the first ballot to the Tennesseean with the coonskin cap, Sen. Estes Kefauver. But Ribicoff says today that "it was a good break that he lost."

It turned out well for Ribicoff, too.

While the Eisenhower-Nixon team was sweeping aside the Stevenson-Kefauver ticket, Kennedy and Ribicoff went home to start four years of fruitful politicking for the big presidential push in 1960. And when Kennedy moved into the White House, the first cabinet post he announced went to "Honest Abe" Ribicoff, who became Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare.

Now the junior U.S. Senator from Connecticut, Ribicoff carries impressive credentials when he speaks on

the political fortunes, past and future, of the Democratic party.

Born of immigrant Jewish parents, he is a former Connecticut state legislator, former two-term congressman (1948-52), twice elected governor of his state (1954-58), ex-cabinet member, and now Senator.

He believes without a doubt that New York Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller will be Kennedy's rival for the presidency in 1964.

"And in my opinion, Kennedy will take him handily," Ribicoff told UPI in an interview.

He shrugged off GOP attacks on Kennedy administration budget deficits as "about par for the political course."

He said current economy thunder from the Republicans actually is the opening round of the 1964 presidential battle.

"We are entering the period now of the fighting for 1964," he said. "I don't think they (GOP) are having much impact on the people. The President is still strong. He is doing a good job."

Acknowledged as one of the most artful politicians in the Democratic camp, Ribicoff said he expects to campaign "very hard" in behalf of the Democratic national ticket which he anticipates "will be

the same — Kennedy and (Lyndon B.) Johnson."

The handsome, 52-year-old Senator made it plain that as an ex-administrator of the New Frontier, he thinks the executive branch of the government could stand a few reforms.

"There are 46 different agencies in the field of education alone spending more than \$2 billion a year," he said.

"There is too much duplication in government. There are not only differences in functions, but some agencies actually are seeking opposite results. There's a very big job, a constructive job, to be done here."

His immediate target: to eliminate overlapping in the field of environmental health. This is no modest project for a freshman Senator.

It may involve putting under one administrator such diverse programs as those dealing with air and water pollution, radiation hazards, pesticides control, urban sanitation and pure foods controls. Each agency jealously protects its particular freedom.

As a new member of the key tax-writing Senate Finance committee, he said he favors the administration's two "big" ones — the tax cut-reform program and health care for the aged under Social Security.

But typically, he protected his political flanks by taking a neutral stand on specific details.

"I think the President will get some form of tax cut this year," he said. "I think it is needed for the economy. It is long overdue."

Tax cuts, yes. But as for "what reforms the bill should contain, that is a matter of conjecture, he added. He also avoided specifics when asked about limitations on tax deductions, explaining that he wanted to study the matter

before making up his mind.

As for health benefits for the elderly — a program that plagued him as secretary — he indicated it may be 1964 before it passes Congress.

Ribicoff's record as head of the sprawling HEW department for two years was undistinguished. He may be known in the history books simply as the fourth secretary of HEW. But, in justice, he often was caught in congressional cross-fire on inflammable issues over which he had no control.

The federal aid to education

program for which he was responsible was defeated partly because of the religious hassle over aid to church schools. Medicare went down to defeat in the Senate, 52-48, but it was a futile fight because everyone knew it was foredoomed in the House.

Today, Ribicoff classifies the welfare reform bill passed last year as his "greatest achievement" at HEW. "That was my baby," he said. It broadened the aid-to-dependent children program and placed greater emphasis on

taking welfare recipients off relief rolls and putting them on payrolls.

He made a point of defending the Social Security program against detractors who contend the vast welfare and retirement fund is going broke.

"That's a lot of hooey," he said. "That is floated by the diehard opponents of Social Security. The Social Security system is soundly based."

Although he headed up the HEW department, Ribicoff is

no moist-eyed welfare stater. He is an urbane, effective, pragmatic politician, and his own best public relations counselor.

He had a hankering to be appointed to the Supreme Court, but Kennedy filled two vacancies instead with Byron (Whizzer) White and Arthur K. Goldberg. But it was not a killing setback. Ribicoff quit HEW went out and got elected as a U.S. Senator.

To the despair perhaps of the extreme liberal and ex-

reme conservative wings of the party, Ribicoff rides in the middle of the political road.

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