



*In seven days time Florida Democrats will name their party delegates*

# Lucky or not—the White House marathon starts out on October 13 ...

ON Saturday, October 13, Democrats in Florida will elect party delegates who will, in November, cast a straw vote for the next President of the U.S.

This will be the first Carter-Kennedy face-off of the 1980 presidential primary contest and Jimmy Carter is widely expected to be victorious, giving his sagging image a needed lift.

Carter has been waging an all-out campaign in Florida. Both Lillian and Rosalynn Carter have toured the state and Andrew Young has added his support. Furthermore, hundreds of Floridians have found themselves with invitations to the White House in recent weeks.

The respected political newsletter, *The Baron Report*, noted a few days ago that "most of the national press and nearly all of the Florida Democratic establishment

shares the President's conviction that he will win in that state on October 13."

"He is pouring massive resources into the effort; if he loses (or even runs very close) it will be a major psychological setback to his supporters around the country."

## "Unauthorised" committees

Even the draft-Kennedy forces concede Carter is likely to top their man this first time out. Their goal seems to be only a credible showing for Kennedy, who they will emphasise hasn't even entered the presidential sweeps-takes as yet.

Kennedy forces, though, have had a huge financial advantage in Florida. Carter's people have been loudly upset by a Federal Elections Commission (FEC) ruling



allowing Kennedy to raise many times more funds than Carter.

Because Kennedy is not a declared candidate, a Federal Election law loophole allows up to five "unauthorised" Draft-



Kennedy committees each able to raise up to SR17,500 per contributor.

Carter's "authorised" committees, on the other hand, are allowed to collect but SR3,500 per contributor. Furthermore, with



Kennedy's committees classified as "independent," amounts raised in Florida won't count against Kennedy's legal spending limit should he eventually declare for the presidency.

However, the law remains

unclear and uncharted and it now seems possible the FEC might come forth with rulings offsetting these Kennedy advantages depending upon when Kennedy declares.

## FEC could reverse itself

It seems possible the FEC could, in effect, reverse itself if Kennedy declares before the straw vote in November, by freezing the amounts raised by his supporters beyond SR3,500 per contributor.

Though Carter may win this first skirmish, Kennedy is showing surprising strength throughout the South, once thought to be Carter's firmest bastion of support.

At the 45th annual meeting of the Southern Governors Association, last week, both critics and allies of the President emphasised that Senator Kennedy had consid-

erable support throughout the region.

A Gallup Poll conducted between September 7 - 10 underscored this collective judgement of the Governors. Against Reagan and Ford Carter polled 50 to 43 and 44 to 48. Nationally the figures are 47 to 46 for Carter against Reagan and 42 to 51 in a Carter-Ford race.

But Kennedy's showing was considerably more impressive in the South—61 to 33 over Reagan and 58 to 38 over Ford compared to national figures of 62 to 32 and 66 to 35.

As for the actual primary elections which begin in New Hampshire on February 25, Carter has practically conceded this first major test of voter sentiment to Kennedy.

"I don't think we've got much chance of a victory there," Press Secretary, Jody Powell, recently admitted, "but we can make it closer than people think."