

# Write-in Vote Seen as Key to GOP Win

The key to victory in Alaska's U.S. Senate race "lies hidden in the intentions of the 16,015 voters who supported Ernest Gruening in the August 27 primary."

GOP state chairman Robert A. Davenny made this cryptic observation today as he issued a call for Gruening's backers "to join the winning Republican team and march ahnd-in-hand with victory from the court house to the white house."

On Tuesday, Alaska's supreme court reversed an earlier superior court ruling and gave Gruening's write-in campaign a quasi-legal status. It is expected that Gruening will forge ahead with his campaign to defeat Mike Gravel and Elmer Rasmuson in the November 5 general election.

Davenny said, "Rasmuson will be the next U.S. Senator from Alaska if he can pick up 40 per cent of the Gruening primary vote, or if he can deny Gravel a simple majority of the Gruening vote." He predicted

there is a good chance this will happen.

The chairman, who has a reputation for being one of the most knowledgeable politicians in Alaska, said late Tuesday after the Supreme Court decision was announced, he doesn't think more than 3,000 persons will support Gruening's write-in bid. He said the other 13,000 who voted for Gruening in the primary will split up their votes between Rasmuson and Gravel.

"I believe that Rasmuson will pick up more of the Gruening votes than Gravel will," he said. "Gruening's supporters have never liked Gravel. I think they will switch over to the Rasmuson camp in wholesale numbers. They know they can trust Elmer Rasmuson."

In the primary, Rasmuson and Ted Stevens, the two Republican candidates, polled a total of 19,431 votes. Gravel polled 17,971 and Gruening received 16,015. Many of Gravel's votes,

reportedly, were crossover votes from Republicans and Democrats who voted for him in order to

defeat Gruening. Gruening himself made this claim shortly after the primary.