

Cranston initiates presidential race

United Press International
WASHINGTON—Sen. Alan Cranston of California, pledging to end the "insane policy" of nuclear arms buildup, Wednesday, became the first Democrat to formally enter the 1984 presidential race.

The Senate Democratic whip, 68, who set the record in his age bracket for the 100-yard dash, began the race as a liberal running far behind the two favorites—former Vice President Walter Mondale and Sen. John Glenn. "I came here Wednesday to announce my intention to campaign for the office of president of the United States," Cranston said in a prepared statement. "I have no other choice—not if I am to remain loyal to the principles which I have developed during four decades of public life."

Cranston made the announcement beneath the ornate crystal chandeliers of the Senate Caucus Room—the same place where John and Robert Kennedy and a dozen other senators have begun their run for the White House.

No one began earlier than Cranston, who announced his candidacy more than a year before the nation's first primary in New Hampshire.

Although little-known nationwide, Cranston is a dedi-

cated and hard campaigner who is one of the party's best fundraisers. Because his native California provides 20 percent of the delegates needed for nomination, Cranston's candidacy will become credible if he makes any kind of respectable showing in the early primaries.

In launching his campaign, Cranston sought to carve out as his constituency the "overwhelming majority" who believe nuclear weapons threaten to wipe out society.

Cranston said his stand comes not from the nuclear freeze movement but from the fallout of Hiroshima, and the conference of 50 Americans who gathered shortly after World War II to discuss the meaning of the nuclear age.

"Ever since, I have concentrated on arms control, defense and foreign policy so that I could work, constructively and creatively, against the holocaust of modern war," said Cranston.

"I believe in the necessities of defense," he said. "But we have overleapt the bounds of reason."

"There can be no limited nuclear war, no winnable nuclear war, no survivable nuclear war—only devastation. The cost of this insane policy—for both America and Russia—is that neither of us can meet the most basic aspirations of our people,"

said Cranston.

"There can be no cure for growing unemployment, decreasing productivity, the diminishing opportunity for individual Americans to enhance their well-being," he said, "if we continue to pour a mounting portion of our national resources—our money—into a race to build arms."

Cranston said his first act if elected president would be to sit down with the Soviets and negotiate an arms agreement.

"I will seek, first of all, a mutual and verifiable freeze on the production, testing and development of nuclear weapons," he said. "I will propose that we meet again and again and again until we agree on substantial reductions in our arsenals of megadeath."

Cranston was a correspondent for International News Service, which was bought by United Press 30 years ago, and published a translation of Hitler's "Mein Kampf" (My Struggle) before the start of World War II.

He was elected California state controller in 1958 and 1962. When Republican Sen. Thomas Kuchel was beaten in a primary by right winger Max Rafferty, Cranston took advantage of the resulting hostility and won a Senate seat in 1968.

UPI survey shows drop in average gas prices

United Press International
An informal United Press International survey shows that gasoline costs less than \$1 a gallon at numerous service stations across the country, and federal officials say its average price is the lowest in three years.

The latest official figures show regular leaded gasoline sold for an average \$1.18 per gallon in December. The price of unleaded gasoline, which is used in newer model cars, was \$1.26.

Federal officials say prices have dropped about a nickel a gallon on average since December, and experts predict a further lowering of prices by spring.

The survey found gasoline selling for as little as 92 cents a gallon for regular leaded at a suburban Denver, Colo., service station.

The price at Don Plummer's Standard station included a 4-cent discount for paying cash. Other Denver-area stations have been selling gasoline for about 93 cents a gallon.

Pump prices vary nationwide in part because of differing state taxes. Gas prices will go up coast-to-coast April 1, when the federal excise tax increases by 5 cents a gallon to 9 cents.

"Gasoline prices are the lowest since February 1980," a

spokesman for the Energy Information Administration said in Washington, Tuesday. "At that time, leaded regular was selling for slightly below \$1.16 and unleaded for about \$1.20," he said.

"Part of it has to do with the fact that there are many more self-service stations today than three years ago," the spokesman said. "And demand has gone down substantially. We're using a lot less gas today."

Oil expert Dan Lundberg said that many gas stations in the United States are selling leaded gasoline for under \$1.

"Prices are very likely to continue to decline," Lundberg said. "Between Dec. 17 and Jan. 21, the overall price of gasoline declined 4.4 cents a gallon."

He said falling prices do not reflect a gas war among station operators, although some station managers disagreed.

Lundberg said the decrease is coming at the refinery level, reflected by a \$1 per barrel drop in prices companies pay for crude.

Part of the lower crude prices is the result of a fallout from a dispute among oil producing countries over production levels and pricing in the face of an international oil surplus caused by the worldwide recession.

The Arkansas Automobile Association said gasoline prices are going down drastically in the

state, with some self-service stations selling regular gas for under \$1 a gallon.

George Diaz, a Mobil station manager in south Miami, said he is selling regular gasoline for 98.9 cents at the self-service pump.

"We do pretty well with that price, but nobody's going crazy about it or anything," said Diaz.

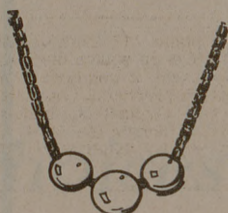
Frank Bruno, an Amoco station manager in Orlando, Fla., said, "There's no need for a gas war." He said that he is selling regular leaded gasoline for 98.9 cents a gallon, but he is losing 3 cents a gallon at those prices.

"The oil companies tell us to get competitive," Bruno said. "Why don't the oil companies get competitive? The gas war isn't between the oil companies. It's between the dealers."

Gas prices fell to 99.9 cents a gallon for self-service regular last month in some locations in Iowa. Retailers got into what state officials called a reverse gas-war that pushed prices back up to the \$1.12-\$1.15 range in Des Moines.

Based on survey of 100 gasoline stations in New York City by the Department of Consumer Affairs, prices ranged from a low of \$1.26 a gallon for leaded regular to \$1.49 for premium unleaded.

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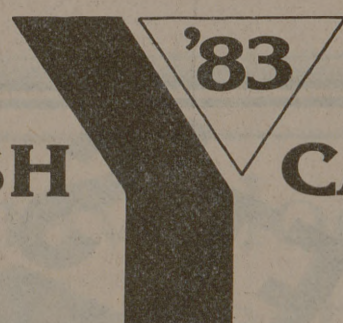
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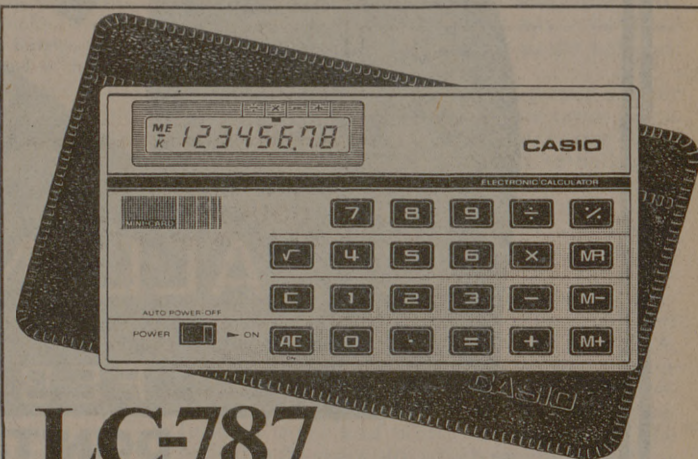


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