**Committee:** 93rd United States Congress

**Topic:** The Watergate Scandal

**Role:** George Stanley McGovern

McGovern was a historian, a decorated WWII veteran and a Democratic politician from South Dakota. He is known for his role as the director of the “Food for Peace” programme started by John F. Kennedy and he was also the Chair of the United States Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs.

He resigned from the prior role in order to run as a senator from South Dakota for the Democratic Party. He won the elections in 1962, and became the first Democrat elected to Congress from South Dakota in 22 years. He kept this role through re-elections until 1980, where he lost to the Republican candidate James Abdnor.

McGovern is known as a strong example of “modern American liberalism” and he became most known by his strong opposition to the growing U.S. involvement on the ongoing Vietnam War. He staged a brief nomination run in 1968 elections as a stand-in for the assassinated Robert F. Kennedy.

McGovern has also fundamentally altered the candidate election methods of the Democratic Party, together with Donald M. Fraser by the creation of a commission today known as McGovern-Fraser Commission or more formally, Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection.

McGovern is also known for his disapproval of the Republican President Richard Nixon, believing he was unfit for the role. He strongly disagreed with the expansion of the Food Stamp Program in 1970, he had to compromise on a number of points, but legislation signed in 1970 established the principles of free food stamps and a nationwide standard for eligibility. He advocated withdrawal from the Vietnam War, and a thirty seven percent reduction of military spending over three years.

McGovern was the party’s 1972 presidential candidate; running together with Thomas Eagleton, who later was replaced by Sargent Shriver. His candidacy was controversial among the Democratic Party; however it was believed that the candidate did not matter since President Nixon was on his highest approval rates throughout his career. He has lost to Richard Nixon with a landslide of 61 to 37 percent.

The full dimensions of the infamous Watergate scandal did not take place during the 1972 presidential election, however; the majority of the press focused on McGovern's difficulties and other news, rather than the break-in or who was behind it, and a majority of voters were unaware of Watergate during the campaign.