

11-1-1977

1977 Montana Democratic Convention

Max S. Baucus

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Senator * or Department*: **BAUCUS**

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(1) Subject*: **Federal Issues**

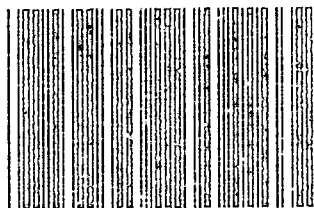
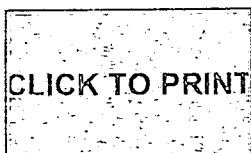
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(2) Subject* **Montana Democratic Convention**

DOCUMENT DATE*: **11/01/1977**

(Example: 01/12/1966)

* "required information"



BAUCUS

Draft of Mar's Speech Before the 1977
Montana Democratic Convention
November, 1977

Thank you (introducer). I am aware that most political speeches are like the horns of a steer—a point here and a point there, and a lot of bull in between. You can't accuse me of having a lot of "bull" in this speech because it's going to be a short speech. I want to raise three issues that are of critical importance to America and to Montana.

The first is the unresponsiveness of big government. Someone observed that government decisions are like elephants mating. It all occurs at a high level, it is accompanied by a lot of noise, and it takes two years for anything to develop. I am afraid that most of the people in the U.S. see government that way. Government is too big, too wasteful, and too unresponsive. One of my constituents analyzes it this way: Congress won't lead, it won't follow, and it won't get out of the way. I think his observation applies not only to the Congress, but also to the rest of federal government and state government and local government. Another constituent says we don't have government of, by and for the people, we have government of, by and for the bureaucrats and politicians.

But anybody can complain. Those of us who are in politics need to come up with some practical ways to make government serve its true function of serving the people. Let me briefly suggest a couple of possibilities. One is reform of government. Montana already has an open-meetings article in its constitution, but the federal government needs more opening up. Perhaps we need some form of a sunset law or zero-based budgeting or management by objectives so that every government agency has to justify its existence and budget periodically.

Along with government reform, elected and appointed officials must get in touch with the people. Town meetings are the best way

of doing this that I have found.

The second important issue is agriculture. You have all seen the bumper sticker that says, "If you eat, you are involved in agriculture." Some people try to put the issue as if it were farmers vs. consumers. But with 4¢ worth of wheat in a 69¢ loaf of bread, it is not the farmers who should give the consumers a break. The farm issue has been a political football, kicked this way and that by every new government decision.

Dear Abby once received this letter: "Dear Abby, I am 16 years old and my boyfriend will soon be 18. I don't know what to get him for his birthday. What do you think he wants? Signed, Confused." Abby wrote back, "Dear Confused, Never mind what he wants, get him a tie." For too long the government attitude has been never mind what the farmer wants, give him a tie. Farming and ranching is one of the few businesses in the world in which if the owners are too successful, they drive themselves out of business. A large wheat crop or a surplus of cattle can sometimes be a disaster. That's crazy, when the world is filled with starving and malnourished people.

The answers are complex, but let us point the direction I think we should be heading. The first answer is that the rancher and farmer need a fair price for their product, a price higher than production costs. The second answer is that agriculture needs to be protected from encroachments on the water and land that is needed. The third answer is that the family farmer must be protected from the giant corporations who are gobbling up the farm land, but have no roots in agriculture. My family farm bill provides one avenue for this approach. There are other answers and other approaches to these problems, but we can't find them if we aren't asking the right questions.

The third issue is the most complex of all—energy and the environment. On the one hand we cannot dispell the heritage of future generations for our present greed. We cannot bang

survive without a quality environment. But on the other hand, it is also clear that we need energy and resources to fuel our economy. Modern civilization cannot survive without energy. So how do we reconcile these opposing demands?

In this area, yesterday's solutions are often today's problems. As the pace of life increases, our perspective changes. We are travelling in a car speeding toward the year 2000, so that things which are near at hand seem blurred. We have to take the long view in order to get our bearings. Unfortunately, government policies in energy and the environment have been like the man who saved off the board three times, and it was still too short.

What direction do we need to be going? This is incredibly hard, but here is my opinion. In the long run, we need alternate energy sources. There is a limited supply of oil and gas and present methods of stripping and burning coal are environmentally unacceptable over the long run. We need solar, geothermal, methane, gambol and hydrogen energy. We need wind energy. Maybe we could attach a windmill to every politician. We need to find clean ways of converting coal to energy. Does this sound utopian? (Scientist) says that if America had made a commitment to alternate energy 10 years ago, it could now be supplying (25%) of this nation's needs. That decision was not made.

Montana should not be a sacrifice for this country's failure to make difficult decisions. In the short run, some compromises may be necessary which are not really acceptable to anybody. But in the long run we must have both a clean environment and sufficient energy. We need industry without sacrificing agricultural lands and water. Without energy there is no modern civilization. Without an environment, there is no life. We must put effort now into the environmentally acceptable long-range solutions--alternate energy sources. There is a myriad of other answers. I have been discussing some of them with you individually, and I know the discussions will continue through the campaign and after.

Let us close with a footnote on the style of the campaign.

As Democrats, let us fully discuss these issues—unresponsive government, agriculture, energy and the environment. Let us discuss other important issues like inflation and unemployment. But let us avoid the gutter politics that has sometimes marked Montana campaigns in the past. Let us agree to disagree on matters of substance, but leave aside personal attacks, half-truths, and rumors. The person who is always slinging mud is losing ground. We do not need to gloss over our differences, but let our campaigns be constructive rather than destructive.

And now I feel like the little boy who stepped on three tacks—I won't linger on these points. Thank you.

Attempt the impossible - future as I see it

Pondera

Mont

US + Dem Party.

Spotted Ass

to orbit of city

Farm bill's target for 1977 wheat -

Lessons: cooperation, luck & luck prices low;
very lucky. Need to bring values to MT

It's not only Farm program:

In Pondera

- MX missile - Indian Issues - beef imports

In Mont

- timber - wilderness - copper - coal - our
fair share of fed: all these pressures
building

In U.S

- balance budget w/o unemployment
- health care w/o tax to death
- Nat defense & reduce spending

To Congressional feather, MT perspective is in
jeopardy

- 100% 1/2 - hopefully more