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Montana Democrats Speech

Max S. Baucus

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NEARLY 4 YEARS AGO I WALKED 731 MILES ACROSS WESTERN MONTANA FOR CONGRESS... FROM GARDNER TO YAK. AFTER MY FIRST ELECTION, I WALKED INTO CONGRESS AND WALKED INTO A SENATE-HOUSE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE, which was marking up an 18 billion-dollar tax bill, and I was ejected! I was thrown out because the meeting was closed to the public. AFTER THAT I INTRODUCED A RESOLUTION WHICH REQUIRED ALL FUTURE COMMITTEE MEETINGS TO BE OPEN. WITH THE HELP OF OTHER REFORM-MINDED DEMOCRATS, WE PASSED A RESOLUTION AND NOW ALL COMMITTEE MEETINGS MAY BE ATTENDED BY THE PRESS, and, more importantly, THE PUBLIC. THIS HAS OPENED UP THE CONGRESS AND MADE IT MORE ACCOUNTABLE. THIS WAS A POSITIVE FIRST STEP, BUT THERE IS MUCH MORE TO BE DONE.

On that walk across Montana I met Democrats on farms and ranches, in mines and smelters, in sawmills and schools. They represented backgrounds and interests as diverse as Montana's geography. As I started that walk I was anxious and uncertain of the result. But as I progressed, I was heartened by the realization that we all have one thing in common—that we share a common love, in Montana, for its beauty and its way of life.

MONTANA DEMOCRATS BELIEVE THAT GOVERNMENT IS NOT JUST A NECESSARY EVIL BUT AN INSTRUMENT OF CONSTRUCTIVE CHANGE AND SOCIAL BETTERMENT. IT WAS MONTANA DEMOCRATS THAT SENT TO THE SENATE INDIVIDUALS LIKE WALSH, MURRAY, WHEELER, MANSFIELD, METCALF, AND MELCHER—MEN WHO ESTABLISHED A STANDARD OF PUBLIC SERVICE BY WHICH FUTURE GENERATIONS WILL BE MEASURED. MONTANA DEMOCRATS GOT MONTANA MOVING AGAIN A DECADE AGO AFTER 16 YEARS OF REPUBLICAN PROMISES AND NON-PERFORMANCE. MONTANA DEMOCRATS WORKED TO REORGANIZE STATE GOVERNMENT AND MAKE IT MORE RESPONSIVE TO THE PEOPLE. MONTANA DEMOCRATS RALLIED TOGETHER AND DEFEATED
THE REGRESSIVE REPUBLICAN SALES TAX PROPOSAL IN 1971. MONTANA DEMOCRATS PROVIDED THE IMPETUS TO MAKE OUR STATE CONSTITUTION INTO A MODEL FOR OTHER STATES TO FOLLOW. AND, MONTANA DEMOCRATS, MINDFUL OF OUR HISTORY, WORKED TO PROVIDE THE HIGHEST COAL SEVERANCE TAX IN THE NATION, SO WHEN THE BOOM IS OVER, PART OF MONTANA'S WEALTH WILL REMAIN FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR CHILDREN.

Now a new challenge confronts our party. The leadership vacuum left by Mansfield and Metcalf will be difficult to fill. New leadership must be tapped. New dedication to public service must fill the void. Now, more than ever, we need Democratic leadership in both Senate seats and both House seats. Whether this new challenge will be met is a question to be answered by you, the leaders of the Montana Democratic Party. Some people say that the coalition of farmers, laborers, small business people and educators has grown complacent and fallen apart. Some people say that a hotly contested Democratic primary for congressional and Senatorial seats will divide the Democratic Party and guarantee a Republican victory in November. Still others say that the Republican right-wing has gained respectability and, with campaign coffers swollen with corporate political-action contributions, pose an invincible political force. To these people I have but one answer—they don't know the Montana Democratic party, and they don't know the Democratic Party in Lewistown! I am reminded of Mo Udall's description last year of how Democrats act in primaries. He said we're like a firing squad lined up in a circle! . . . But that description is incomplete. We have always been not the closed, but the open party—discussing and discussing positions and issues. WE'RE SCRAPY, BUT THIS IS NOTHING NEW; IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THAT WAY — AND THAT'S THE WAY IT SHOULD BE.
WE DEMOCRATS HAVE ALWAYS MET, EXPOSED AND DEFEATED PHONY RIGHT WING CHALLENGES BEFORE. FOR WE KNOW THAT REAL DEMOCRACY IS NOT SIMPLISTIC PATRIOTISM, RATHER THAT REAL DEMOCRACY HAS DIVERSITY AND VITALITY FLOWING FROM OUR BASIC CONSTITUTIONAL FREEDOMS. YET, NONETHELESS, THERE ARE SOME WHO WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE THAT APART FROM THE FAR RIGHT, THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OUR PARTY AND THE REPUBLICANS -- THAT IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE WHO THEY VOTE FOR. TO THESE PEOPLE WITH DIM AND FADED MEMORIES I SAY -- WAS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN F.D.R. AND HOOVER? WAS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN L.B.J. AND GOLDWATER? AND NONE OF US SHOULD FORGET THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HUBERT HUMPHREY AND RICHARD NIXON.

Of course there's a difference. Will Rogers knew that difference when he said: Republicans take care of the big money for big money takes care of them.

Will Rogers was right. Again Next year we will be facing big Republican money in even greater abundance. JIM FOREMAN, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DEMOCRATIC CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE TOLD ME THE OTHER DAY: HE REPORTED TO ME THAT THE CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE WAS OUT OF DEBT AND A $50,000 SURPLUS. REMEMBERING THAT THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE STILL HAS SUBSTANTIAL UNPAID BILLS FROM AS FAR BACK AS 1968, I THOUGHT JIM'S REPORT WAS ENCOURAGING NEWS. THEN I ASKED JIM HOW DOES THAT COMPARE WITH THE REPUBLICAN CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE.

I suspected the GOP would have more. But do you know how much more? Would you believe twice as much? How about 10 times as much? 40 times? You're getting close, but you're only half way there. That's right, they have 80 times as much as we do. 4 million dollars versus our $50,000.
YET MONEY ALONE CAN'T BUY ELECTIONS, BECAUSE WHEN CAMPAIGNS SPEND BIG SUMS, THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT THEY WILL WIN. (I BELIEVE THAT) THE REAL WAY TO WIN ELECTIONS IS WITH HARD WORK, COMPASSION, CREATIVITY, AND COOPERATION.

Yes fellow Democrats, next year's election presents us with a unique challenge and opportunity. Personally, I look forward to this challenge. Indeed, I welcome it. I relish the opportunity to meet with and listen to my fellow Montanans, to present my record, my votes, and above all my past performances — to share with you my love for Montana and my hopes for the future of this state.

LET ME CLOSE WITH A FOOTNOTE ON THE STYLE OF CAMPAIGNS. AS DEMOCRATS LET US FULLY DISCUSS THE IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING MONTANA — UNRESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT, AGRICULTURE, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT. LET US DISCUSS OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES LIKE UNEMPLOYMENT AND INFLATION. BUT LET US AVOID THE GUTTER POLITICS THAT HAVE SOMETIMES MARKED MONTANA CAMPAIGNS IN THE PAST. LET US AGREE TO DISAGREE ON MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE. WHEN THOSE DISCUSSIONS ARE FINISHED AND THE PRIMARY OVER, I KNOW THAT WE WILL DO AGAIN WHAT WE HAVE ALWAYS DONE — UNITE BEHIND OUR DEMOCRATIC NOMINEES AND WORK VERY HARD FOR VICTORY IN NOVEMBER.