

7-7-1978

American Legion State Convention (1)

Max S. Baucus

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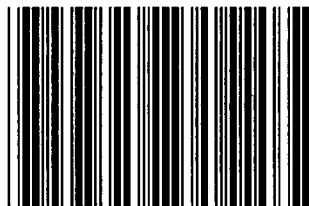
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[REDACTED] Address Before the American Legion State Convention

[REDACTED] 07/07/1978

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BAUCUS

AN ADDRESS BY CONGRESSMAN MAX BAUCUS
BEFORE THE AMERICAN LEGION STATE CONVENTION

FRIDAY, JULY 7
KALISPELL, MONTANA

^{MORNING}
GOOD ~~EVENING~~. IT'S AN HONOR TO STAND BEFORE YOU TODAY. I'D
LIKE TO THANK YOU AND YOUR DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT, TONY CUMMINGS, FOR
INVITING ME TO SPEAK WITH YOU.

THE AMERICAN LEGION IS A DYNAMIC, INFLUENTIAL ORGANIZATION.
IT IS AN ORGANIZATION WHOSE PRIMARY GOAL IS AS SOLID AND CLEARLY
STATED AS A GRATEFUL AMERICAN COULD HOPE FOR: THE AMERICAN LEGION
PROTECTS OUR COUNTRY'S DEFENDERS FROM THE DISADVANTAGES ASSOCIATED
WITH MILITARY SERVICE.

> AS ONE AMERICAN WHO HAS NOT FORGOTTEN YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS, I
SALUTE AND CONGRATULATE YOU.

WE ALL BELIEVE IN A STRONG AMERICA. TO KEEP AMERICA STRONG
AND FREE, WE MUST HAVE A STRONG MILITARY. I BELIEVE THAT WE MUST
PLAN OUR DEFENSES CAREFULLY AND SPEND WHATEVER AMOUNTS ARE
REQUIRED TO PRESERVE OUR NATIONAL SECURITY AND OUR LEADERSHIP ROLE
IN WORLD AFFAIRS. AND, YOU CAN BE CERTAIN I WILL WORK TO MAINTAIN
MONTANA MILITARY AS A CONTRIBUTION TO OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE.

BUT NATIONAL DEFENSE, NO MATTER HOW ELABORATE AND TECHNICALLY
COMPLEX, STILL COMES DOWN TO ONE THING: THE SOLDIER. THE PERSON
WHO IS WILLING TO SACRIFICE THE COMFORT AND SAFETY OF CIVILIAN LIFE
TO PROTECT WHAT HE BELIEVES IN.

YOU ARE SPECIAL, NOT JUST BECAUSE YOU ARE WORKING TO DEFEND
THE RIGHTS AND ENTITLEMENTS OF YOUR LESS-FORTUNATE COMRADES, BUT
BECAUSE YOU CHOSE TO SERVE YOUR COUNTRY WHEN YOUR COUNTRY NEEDED
YOU -- AND YOUR COUNTRY IS GRATEFUL.

BUT NATIONS FORGET ALL TOO FAST THOSE WHO SACRIFICED SO GREATLY. THERE IS AN OLD RHYME ABOUT VETERANS WHICH STATES IT WELL:

FOR IT'S "TOMMY THIS," AND "TOMMY THAT,"
AND "CHUCK HIM OUT! THE BRUTE!"
BUT IT'S "SAVIOR OF THE COUNTRY,"
WHEN THE GUNS BEGIN TO SHOOT!

SINCE THE END OF THE VIETNAM WAR, THE BUDGET OF THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HAS DECREASED FROM 5.1% OF THE TOTAL NATIONAL BUDGET IN 1975 TO 3.8% IN FY 1979.

THAT DOWNWARD SHIFT SIGNALS AN ALARMING TREND TO THOSE OF US WHO CONSIDER IT A NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY TO AID THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO DEFENDED OUR COUNTRY DURING ITS TIME OF NEED.

FORTUNATELY, THERE ARE DEDICATED, CAPABLE ORGANIZATIONS IN WASHINGTON LOOKING OUT FOR THE VETERANS OF AMERICA. THE AMERICAN LEGION IS A LEADER IN THIS CAUSE -- AND WE ARE INDEED FORTUNATE TO HAVE MEN LIKE ROBERT SMITH AND YOUR WASHINGTON LEGISLATIVE STAFF WATCHING OVER THE CONGRESSIONAL SCENE.

MY MESSAGE TO YOU TODAY IS THIS: WE MUST GET FULL FORCE BEHIND YOUR NATIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE LEADERS AND LET THE POWERS THAT BE KNOW THAT YOU WON'T STAND TO HAVE THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION STRIPPED OF ANY SMOOTHLY FUNCTIONING PROGRAMS.

THE ATTACKS COME FROM ALL SIDES -- HEW, THE ADMINISTRATION, INTEREST GROUPS -- EVERYONE WANTS TO TAKE A BITE OUT OF THE APPLE. AND I'VE SEEN IT HAPPEN HUNDREDS OF TIMES -- WORTHWHILE, EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS GET PHASED OUT BECAUSE OF THE FINITE NUMBER OF DOLLARS AVAILABLE IN THE FEDERAL TREASURY.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Max

FROM: Pete

DATE: July 5, 1978

SUBJECT: American Legion Speech, Friday, July 7

Here are some American Legion names to know:

Robert Charles Smith -- National Commander
Frank Nomsen -- National Adjutant
Michael G. Schlee -- Washington, D.C. Director
Mylio Kraja (pronounced Krya) -- D.C. Legislative
Director

This speech is basically the same as your VFW speech a few weeks ago. The American Legion asked for all the topics in it, so it should be appropriate.

There are more WWI vets in the American Legion than the VFW, so they might be interested in H.R. 9000 and H.R. 10173. H.R. 9900, the Anderson bill to give WWI veterans and their widows \$150 per month is a hot topic. This bill will probably never be passed, largely because it's a budget buster, and the VA testified against it. You are a cosponsor of this bill, which is still in committee. In its place, the committee offered H.R. 10173, which you voted for. H.R. 10173 gives veterans 80 years and over (mainly WWI vets) subsidies according to their income.

The Anderson bill is a budget buster, 10173 gets the money to those who need it most.

M E M O R A N D U M

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