Montana Stockgrowers Convention 100th Anniversary

Max S. Baucus

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR MAX BAUCUS

BEFORE THE MONTANA STOCKGROWERS CONVENTION

Miles City, Montana

May 31, 1984

Pat(Goggins), Torrey(Johnson), Mons(Tiegen), Members of the Montana Stockgrowers. It's a real pleasure to be here.

I'll begin by

First, let me wish all of you a very happy birthday.

There aren't many institutions that have been able to stand up to the test of time...

but the Montana Stockgrowers have done just that...

...And you all ought to be very proud.

A 100th Anniversary is a great and special occasion.

It's a time to celebrate, and I understand there's been plenty of that.

But, it's also an appropriate time to look back...
And an appropriate time to look forward...

OUR ROOTS

Looking back 100 years, we gain deeper appreciation for our roots.

For all of you, it's a tradition that goes back to your initial meetings in the spring of 1884 here in Miles City...

When men like Conrad Vohrs, Granville Stuart, James Fergus and John Conrad began this great organization...

Granville Stuart, writing about the time the Stockgrowers was founded, had this to say:

"The range business was no longer a reasonably safe business; it was from this time on a 'gamble', with the trump cards in the hands of the elements".

The perseverance of those pioneers should serve as an important example to all of us. That's the tradition from which came.
For me personally, that tradition began in the 1960s when my great grandfather Henry Sieben began branding cattle in Culbertson.

It was one of my proudest moments, when last year, here in Miles City, Dave Rivenes presented me with one of my great grandfather's brands—a diamond.

That brand is over 100 years old. It's a symbol of my early livestock business and roots that means a great deal to me.

OUR FUTURE CHALLENGES

But as we learn the lessons of the past, we also must look forward.

I see these basic challenges ahead of us that we have to meet:

- the challenge of a complex and often arrogant bureaucracy.
- the challenges of skyrocketing interest rates
- and the challenge of international competition.

And it is these challenges that I am spending most of my time.
INTEREST RATES

But that's not all.

As we meet, the federal deficit continues to increase at the rate of $22 million an hour.

At the rate we're going, total federal debt will more than double in the next six years.

...A plight We just can't afford.

- Such huge and persistent deficits push up interest rates.
- They re-ignite inflation.
- They prevent American ranchers and farmers from competing in world markets.

These deficits are the number one challenge to our national economy.

And for the life of me I can't understand why our President and why the Speaker of the House can't bury the political hatchet and get together on a plan that can really get those deficits down.
I am doing my part.

Next week, when the Senate reconvenes I will be serving on the Conference Committee on the Deficit Reduction Bill that reduces the deficit about $144 billion over 3 years.

But that is not enough.

That is why I was one of the original sponsors of the one-year bipartisan spending freeze. - a total freeze on all federal spending for one year.

That plan was fair, it was across the board, and it would have reduced the deficit by $18 billion dollars in the first year... instead of sweeping it under the rug for sometime later.

I want you to know that I'm not going to stop my fight.

I'm going to continue to wage this battle until we've gotten these outrageous deficits under control.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

But as we focus on our challenges here at home, let us not forget the challenges we face from abroad.
It's not enough to produce the world's best livestock.

We've got to be able to sell it!

Today we face an additional trump card...

...And that is the trade barriers set up by our foreign competitors.

I'm proud to have played a part in helping to renegotiate our beef agreement with Japan.

Let me be the first to say that I'm not totally satisfied with the new agreement.

But, I want the record set straight, that if it weren't for the efforts of the Montana Stockgrowers Association and the leadership of Torrey and Mons we wouldn't have gotten close to the new 6,900 tons a year increase.

It was Montana that raised the national conscience on Japanese unfairness and intransigence.

And if we hadn't done it... it wouldn't have gotten done.
It wasn't everything...But it set a new tough tone in negotiations with Japan...and I believe it bodes well for the future.

As we look down the road, that new agreement will expire in 1988.

And once again, I believe, Montana should be out front leading the charge.

So today I ask you to join me in setting a new goal...and meeting it.

Beginning today, let's put the Japanese government on notice that we won't accept any quotas on beef after 1988.

Let them solve their own internal problems...let them get their own house in order... They have four years to do it.

But after that, trade must be a two-way street...

And we won't stand for anything less.
I ask you to join me and I pledge to you we will do everything in our power to totally dismantle the Japanese beef barriers by 1988.

That is the kind of planning we have to engage in.

Those are the kinds of challenges we have to conquer so we can effectively compete in the future.

CONCLUSION

It's a sobering thought, but our great grandchildren will be here in Miles City in 2084 celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Montana Stockgrowers Association.

We want them to be as proud of us then as we are today of Conrad Vohrs and Granville Stuart.

We tend to glamorize those early pioneers. We are proud of them.
But the tasks ahead of us are equally challenging. We have to continually educate and deal with an often arrogant bureaucracy that they couldn't have dreamed of.
We have to master an intricate economy that they couldn't fathom.

We have to win an international competition that is as fierce as the frontiers they conquered.

Our ability to meet those challenges will determine our children's and our grandchildren's future.

I am eager to face those challenges.

And I ask your support and your commitment to work together to meet them.

If we do, the celebration in Miles City a hundred years from now will be equally happy and equally deserved.

Once again, happy birthday!