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"Pulling Together", Montana Legislature

Max S. Baucus

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* "required information"
Thanks for taking a few minutes out of your pressure cooker schedules.

I know it's a tough time to listen to a speech -- even a speech by a gifted orator like me.

A few weeks ago, I asked Conrad Burns to sit down for a little heart-to-heart talk.

I didn't mince any words. I told him some Senators from the same state get along. They work together. It doesn't seem to matter whether they're in the same political party or not.


Others don't get along. They spend more time
working against each other than they spend working for their state.

Here, at the beginning of the new Congress, I reminded Conrad that he and I had an opportunity. It's a lot easier to get started on the right foot than it is to go back and fix things later.

In any case, I said that we should know, up front, where we stand. We can work together. Or we can duke it out.

I suggested to him that it's better that we work together. Better for us. And better for Montana.

Well, you know Conrad. He's honest and unvarnished. He listened. And he answered the way any Montanan would. "Absolutely," he said. We'll work together.

Don't get me wrong. I didn't vote for Conrad, and he probably won't volunteer to be my campaign manager. We'll disagree over some of those issues that make the top of the NBC, ABC or CBS evening news -- like whether John Tower should be confirmed as Secretary of Defense.

But but when it comes to Montana issues, that's different. That's when we work together.
Let's face it. We're a small state. We're far away from the Washington bureaucrats who would eliminate the Essential Air Service program, move the FBI office from Butte, or close the veterans' hospital in Miles City.

In most cases, they don't understand Montana's problems. In some cases, they don't really care.

It was true during the Carter Administration. It was true during the Reagan Administration. And it will be true during every Administration to come — that is, unless we elect Francis Bardanouve President.

Until that enlightened day, we've got to circle the wagons. Stick together. And speak with a single, loud, voice.

It's why I've revived the monthly Montana Congressional delegation breakfasts that Mike Mansfield began 40 years ago.

It goes on our schedules automatically. The first Wednesday of each month, at eight o'clock. Conrad, Pat, Ron, and myself. Nobody else.

It's just an hour-long breakfast. But it's also a way to communicate. To work together.
We're a good team, too. We each have different strengths. Pat and I have good ties to the Congessional leadership. Conrad and Ron have good ties to the Administration.

We have complementary committee assignments that cover taxes, trade, agriculture, transportation, public lands, education, energy, telecommunications, health, social security, water, small business, tourism, the environment, and public works.

That just about covers it all.

Separately, each of us is just one member of a 535-member Congress.

Together, we can be dynamite.

A good example is when the Administration tried to slash the Essential Air Service program a few months ago. Havre, Glasgow, Glendive, Sidney, Lewistown, West Yellowstone, Miles City, and Wolf Point all would have lost an economic lifeline.

I called Sam Skinner, the very day he was nominated as the new Secretary of Transportation. He's from downtown Chicago. He hadn't even HEARD of the Essential
Air Service program. I explained it to him and said that if he didn't withdraw the regulations, I would stop his nomination.

He said, "thank you for telling me that." He got the message.

We then organized a group of about 20 Senators who also pledged they'd oppose Skinner's nomination unless he withdrew the regulations.

It didn't stop there.

Conrad serves on the Commerce Committee, which oversees airline regulation. When Sam Skinner came up to testify, then Conrad gave him an earful, as only Conrad can.

Ron and Pat organized support on the House side, making sure that the key chairmen understood the relationship between air service and jobs.

The regulations were withdrawn. We won a battle for Montana.

I'd like to tell you that Max Baucus won the battle single-handedly. But that's not the case. It was constant pressure, from every conceivable angle, from the
entire delegation.

THAT's what it takes. And it's not just Pat, Ron, Conrad, and I who must work together.


And we all have a single, simple, overriding objective. You hear about it every day. I hear about it every day. And I see it every morning when I sit down and open the mail from home. Again, and again, and again. What is it?

Jobs!


Jobs in timber, agriculture, mining, outfitting, and tourism. Jobs at Malmstrom. Jobs in our growing high-tech industry. Jobs in banking and insurance. Yes, even government jobs, like the ones in the FBI office in Butte.
And it's our job in the Congressional delegation to make that happen.

To crack foreign markets for our beef, wheat, and timber.

To fight unfair imports like the Canadian subsidies that could have closed the East Helena smelter.

To keep federal taxes low for our key industries, by repealing harebrained ideas like the heifer tax.

To expand Customs Service in Roosville and along the Hi-Line, so that we can do more business with Canadians.

To seek a national Forest Service roadless areas agreement that balances development, recreation, and conservation.

To improve our agriculture programs so that we can sell more beef, wheat, and barley overseas.

To improve air service and telecommunications. These are the highways and railroads of the 21st Century, and we've got to have the best.

To keep our small hospitals open, because they
anchor the economies of communities like Dillon, Malta, and Big Timber.

And to fight for Montana's fair share of every single federal program that exists. From MHD, to the Missoula radar station, to the wonderful possibilities at the McLaughlin Institute in Great Falls.

We each have our own roles. Sometimes we must do our work independently. Ron, Pat, Conrad and I are working with the federal government. You, of course, are handling our state tax structure and education programs. More often, though, we have to pitch in together -- especially when it comes to attracting new industries.

No chief executive officer is going to move his company to a state that doesn't have its act together.

It's critical that we present a united front -- just as we did two years ago, when U.S. West was deciding where to locate its new research facility.

We didn't get that project for Bozeman. But we gave it a good shot. We made a great impression. And I'm confident that it will pay off in a better Montana telecommunications industry.

We're seeing it again with the Anheuser-Busch
Almost one month ago, Anheuser-Busch was ready to break ground in Idaho Falls.

Then we all got involved. I called Anheuser-Busch. The Governor called Anheuser-Busch. Ron and Conrad called. BN, Montana Rail Link, and Montana Power all agreed to cut their rates. YOU began considering targeted tax relief.

And we're back in the running.

Tomorrow, I'm going to meet with Auggie Busch in my office in Washington. I'm going to put it to him straight. Montanans are ready, willing, and able.

We won't just meet the competition. We'll BEAT it.

And that isn't just true for Anheuser-Busch. It's true across the board.

Montana is ready to look the future square in the eye.

We have the resources in our minerals, our agriculture, our timberlands, and our natural beauty.
And we have the greatest resources of all -- our people.

A few weeks ago I toured the United Tote plant down by Shepard. They make 20% of all the computerized racetrack equipment, nationwide.

If you ask UT's president, Lloyd Shelhammer, why he's in Montana, although most of his sales are in the southwest, his answer is simple: Montanans are the best people he can hire, train and then send anywhere in the world.

You and I know exactly what he means. It happens every day, all across Montana. Companies like Ribi Immunochem in Hamilton, Montana Silversmiths at Columbus, and Woods Power Grip in Wolf Point are leaders. They market their products internationally, and they beat the competition.

** PAUSE **

I don't have to tell you that Washington D.C. can be a crazy place. Those of us who work there are besieged by lobbyists and others who love to tell us how great we are.

If you don't watch out, you're tempted to start
believing some of that stuff.

That's why I really appreciate the time I get to spend here at home -- especially my work days. They're one of the best ways I know to clear out my head and recharge my batteries.

One day a month I work at a different job. I put in a full shift, working next to the men and women who are the foundation of our state.

One day I worked as an edger at the Champion plant in Libby, sorting out the edgings at the stud mill. I'll never forget the smile on one fellow's face when I walked into the lunchroom, drenched with sweat. He looked straight at me and said, "looks like you've been working." My arms were sore for a week.

Another day I worked the potlines at Columbia Falls Aluminum with a couple of guys. One had been there 22 years. I have a healthy respect for those fellows.

One cold winter day I worked the Montana Tunnels Gold Mine, punching out clogged holes in the ore regrinder.

Last month I worked as a home health care assistant in Helena, helping take care of people who are
struggling to keep their lives together, including feeding a man stricken with Alzheimer's Disease.

These are the people that you and I work for!

They're demanding bosses. But they're fair. They're not big on politics, but they're big on us getting the job done.

Let's go to work. We're not going to agree about everything. And we're not going to make political campaigns irrelevant.

But I extend my hand. We are hitched to the same wagon. It's called Montana. Let's put our shoulders down and pull together.

Thank you.