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## Kalispell Jefferson-Jackson Dinner

Max S. Baucus

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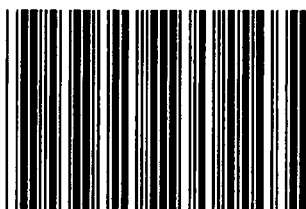
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BAUCUS

KALISPELL JEFFERSON/JACKSON DINNER

Senator Max Baucus

May 13, 1989

Thank you for inviting me here this evening.

Tonight, I want to share with you my experiences from one day last month -- experiences that are probably familiar to most of us -- but sharply different in how they affect us. For myself, my experiences told me a lot about myself -- and why I'm a Democrat.

One day each month I work at a different job here at home. On these Montana work days I put in a full shift next to the men and women who are the foundation of our state.

One day I walked the potlines at Columbia Falls Aluminum with a couple of workers: one had worked there 22 years, the other, 10 years.

Roger Wendt of the Aluminum Council is with us tonight -- I can tell him how sore my back was after just a day of what he does for a living!

One cold winter day I worked the Montana Tunnels Gold Mine in Helena -- punching out clogged holes in the ore regrinder, floating the metal concentrate out of the crushed rock.

Just last week, I spent a day right here in town, at the Kalispell Regional Hospital. I worked as an orderly, joining Butch Brester, the head housekeeper, in emptying bed pans, removing infectious wastes and helping the nurses and doctors -- they even let me take credit for a few births over in the maternity ward ...

But the day I want to tell you about tonight was back in the beginning of the year, over in Helena.

My day started early at the home of Don and Lois Robel. Don suffers from Alzheimer's Disease. He constantly wanders around his house -- rarely sleeping -- requiring help to eat, to bathe and to dress.

That day, I served as a home health care

provider. I helped Lois as she fed her husband -- spoonful by spoonful. Together, we bathed Don, and dressed him. Lois prepared his medication -- expensive, prescription drugs only partially covered by Medicare -- and administered it to Don.

That day, I was able to help. But normally Don's care falls to Lois, who looks after him 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. For Lois and Don, I was the respite care worker whose once-a-week visits provide the only relief that Lois ever gets.

Then I helped another man. John Ward. John is 47 years old. He taught at Carroll College, until an aneurism two years ago damaged his brain, permanently changing his life.

John needs constant attention at the Broadwater Day Center, where he goes every day so his wife Cathy can continue working to support them. And John needs people to work with him doing exercises to develop his attention span and his mental concentration.

It was my job at the Broadwater Center to work with John in regaining his reasoning and organizing

skills. What did we do? I helped him follow the instructions needed to build a toy truck.

With constant work John will one day be back at Carroll. This intelligent and strong-willed man probably won't be a professor again. But he will be able to function on his own and possibly again offer his services in helping others.

People at the Broadwater Center work with John. Together with Cathy, they are helping him regain some of the life -- and dignity -- he once knew.

When I was finished at Broadwater, I delivered hot lunches with the Meal on Wheels folks.

It was during this part of my work day that I had a delightful surprise. I served a meal to my kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Foot (FINISH DETAILS OF STORY).

My last stop was to work with Jim and Ann Haslip. Ann is an elderly, bed-ridden woman who is cared for by her loving and devoted 81-year-old husband. Jim can't bear the thought of sending Ann to a nursing home. Having celebrated 57 years of marriage together, Jim worries about what will happen to Ann if he can no longer take care of her.

Jim has set up Ann's bed in the living room -- a rented hospital-like bed that takes a chunk out of the Haslip's monthly income along with the costs of Ann's medications and special foods. For Jim and Ann, the daily visits -- however brief -- by a home health care worker and the "Meals on Wheels" van are not just a respite, they are a necessity.

The families and caring workers who come together to help people like the Robels, the Wards and the Haslips are examples of the best that America has to offer.

And for us tonight, that tradition of caring -- of seeking to improve the lives of those around us -- is the very soul of our Democratic Party.

From our traditions and our values, Democrats here in Montana and across this country can define our goals and we can work together to achieve them.

The folks in Washington may not recognize it yet, but something is happening out here. We are coming to the end of a difficult era for our country and our party. But we are on the verge of a new era and a Democratic decade.

What should we set out to accomplish in the next decade? I believe that in the 1990's, Democrats must prove to the American people that we are the party of change, the party of hope, the party of the American dream.

From Franklin Roosevelt to John Kennedy, Americans have looked to the Democratic Party as the party of change. As our country begins its third consecutive term under a Republican administration, never has a fundamental change been so long overdue. President Bush may think a new breeze is blowing, as he said in his Inaugural Address, but it's nothing compared to the winds of change that are sweeping the globe. The world changed in the 1980's, and in many important ways, America did not keep pace.

Here in Montana, we saw what was happening in the world. U.S. farm exports declined from \$43 billion in 1981 to \$26 billion by mid-decade, while farm imports grew from \$15 billion to \$21 billion. In 1986, the nation that has served as the world's breadbasket nearly became a net food importer. While the farm outlook has improved somewhat, some of those markets may be gone forever.

And we in Montana know all too well the

double-edged sword of multinational corporations and a changing world economy. From agriculture to resources and manufacturing, a changing world economy is challenging America to prepare for a new economic era.

And America is ready for a change. We are hungry for a change. We need leaders who understand and can guide that change.

Just as we have been the party of change, Democrats have always been the party of hope. Not since the Great Depression have so many Americans cried out for hope. It is up to the Democratic Party to do whatever it takes to bring them hope -- from helping those who need our care -- like Don Robel, John Ward and Ann Haslip -- to winning economic freedom for the working poor of our country.

America was built on the belief that if you worked hard you would get ahead. The 1980's shattered that principle. Millions of American families today are working hard and still falling behind. We need to provide those Americans with the hope of a better day.

Just as we are the party of change and hope, we are also Democrats because ours has always been the party of the American dream.

I want to make the American dream what it used to be -- a Democratic dream. I want to restore the confidence that by working hard, you could provide for your family and someday get ahead. I want average working Americans to regain control of their economic destiny. I want to build a new Democratic era as grand, as rewarding, and as secure as the one the great Democrats before us began.

Democrats know what they are all about. We haven't abandoned our values. We've defined our goals. And we're ready to work together.

You and I here tonight are all Montanans -- whether our roots go back four years or four generations. And we're all Democrats:

-- Democrats for whom health care is not a program, but a tradition: when Lois Robel needs a break from caring for her husband Don, we are there to help her -- if only to provide some comfort, some dignity.

-- Democrats who believe it's wrong that a

worker might put in 22 years of hard work on a job and still not be able to keep the family farm or send the kids to college.

-- Democrats who want more than just an education for our children -- we ask for the best education, an education that will provide our children with the tools they will need to compete in a new economic era..

We know who we are and what we care about. We have survived the 1980's, and the next decade belongs to us.

Thank you.