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Girls State

Max S. Baucus

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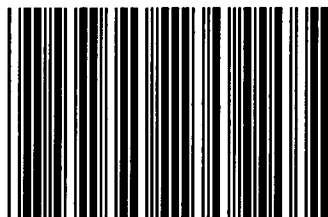
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BAUCUS

Girls State
Senator Max Baucus
Sunday, June 7, 1998
Helena, Montana

Thank you Darlene for that nice introduction and for all of your hard work putting this week together. Let's give Darlene a nice round of applause.

Governor Racicot, President Quinn, Girls State Delegates it is an honor to be with you tonight.

Before I begin, I want to introduce two special guests.

The first is a woman who is a true pioneer. She not only went to college long before it was considered appropriate for women to do so, but she went to one of America's finest colleges. Stanford University.

She is an author and a historian who is as much a part of Helena's history as anyone I know. And she's my mother. Jean Baucus.

Also here tonight is my Chief of Staff Christine Niedermeier. Christine is an accomplished attorney, a former state-legislator and is deeply committed to public service. Women like Chris are the beneficiaries

of the pioneering women like my mother, just as your generation will benefit from the contributions of leaders like Chris. I'm delighted to have them with me tonight and hope you will get a chance to visit with them.

When I was your age, I had no idea what I wanted to do. And frankly, a career in public service was the farthest thing from my mind. But like you, I applied for the American Legion program and was fortunate enough to be selected to attend Boys State over there in Dillon and from there to Boys Nation in Washington, D.C.

In fact I have a photograph hanging in my office of me as a Helena High School Senior standing in the Hall of States with Senator Mike Mansfield and then Congressman Lee Metcalf. While I would not have guessed it then, a decade later I had the honor of serving with both of these men in the United States Congress.

The question is, which of you will have the honor of serving in Congress? How many of you will be college presidents, corporate executives. Will someone in this room be the one who finds the cure for cancer?

Just look at the progress we have made in your lifetime....since 1980.

In 1980 women elected to office were considered a novelty. Now, women wield real power in the decisions made in Washington and in State Capitol's across America.

In 1980 the Supreme Court was all male. Today, the work of the Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and Associate Justice Ruth Ginsberg is considered among the most scholarly legal work of our time.

Back then there was a glass ceiling in corporate America that made it difficult at best for women to make a career out of big business. Today women run many of today's Fortune 500 companies.

And I'd bet few of you were delivered by a female Obstetrician. Today, women outnumber men in medical school and many of the best and brightest researchers are women.

Right here in Montana we have some incredible women leaders I hope some of whom you will have a chance to meet this week.

People like Lt. Governor Judy Martz, Supreme Court Justice Carla Gray. State Senators Mignon Waterman, Sue Bartlett and Vivian Brooke to name just a few.

Today in Montana and America, more than ever before, being a woman means having the right and the opportunity to choose your path. To aim high and to

determine your own destiny.

Today in Montana and America women are real leaders who are determining the future direction of our state and our nation. Women are Governors and Speakers of the House in State Legislatures. Supreme Court Justices and United States Senators.

In fact, the largest state in the country, California, is represented in the United States Senate by two women. Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein. Both real leaders who's voices carry real weight on issues of national policy.

And the world is taking notice of this progress. Earlier this year I was in Indonesia. While there a high school senior told me she liked America because we had a woman as Secretary of State.

My message is simple: There are no limits. No one is standing in your way.

And if you think there are limits to what you can accomplish...what women can accomplish.....a quick look back at Montana political history will prove

otherwise.

Many of you are likely familiar with the series of articles that John Kennedy wrote for Harpers Magazine called "Profiles in Courage." Wonderful stories about courageous Americans which later became a best-selling book. But fewer of you likely are familiar with another article he wrote for Harpers called "Three Women of Courage." You see, three decades ago the accomplishments of women still took a back seat to those of men....no matter the magnitude of the achievement.

One of the three women of courage John Kennedy wrote about was Jeanette Rankin. The first woman elected to the United States Congress, Rankin grew-up on a ranch just outside Missoula. She fought for women's rights and for peace. And she spoke her mind the way too few politicians do today. While it cost her a couple of elections, it never defeated her spirit.

Kennedy wrote that "Jeanette Rankin was not a woman who shrank from hard and difficult tasks."

How right he was. Think of this for a moment. When Jeanette Rankin was elected to the United States Congress in 1916 most women in America did not yet

have the right to vote. And yet this remarkable woman fought for and won voting rights for Montana women in 1915 and introduced successful national legislation to give the vote to women across America.

Interestingly, when what was to become the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was being debated in the Montana Legislature, then State Senator and later U.S. Senator Burton K. Wheeler tried to amend the bill to give voting rights only to women with six children. But Rankin and others prevailed and even Wheeler voted to ratify the amendment giving women the right to vote.

But what made Jeanette Rankin famous was her stand for peace. Her very first vote as a member of the United States Congress came on Good Friday. April 6th, 1917 on the matter of whether or not the Congress should resolve to go to war in what we now call World War I.

On that day, Rankin made an historical vote and said this: "I want to stand by my country, but I cannot vote for war. I vote 'no'."

This was her first vote, and some 65 years later one of her last public statements would demonstrate her lifelong commitment to peace. Just before her death in

1973 at the age of 92, Rankin was in Washington, D.C. for a meeting and said to an old friend "Wouldn't it be too bad if we left this world and hadn't done all we could for peace."

She taught all of us lessons in courage and commitment that have left a living legacy in Montana and that we should honor in our actions.

This is your time. The future is in your hands. And the choices have never been greater.

That's why I spend so much of my time visiting schools. If I've been to your school recently I apologize because you might have heard me say this before, but it's important.

To be successful in life you need to do three things:

Number 1. To thine own heart be true. There is only one of you in the entire world. No one is like you. No one. That makes your ability to contribute completely unique and only you know what makes your blood stir...what challenges bring out the best in you.

Number 2. There are no closed doors. Nothing is impossible. We are all going to fail. But when we do, we learn from our mistakes, get back up and try again.

Number 3. Pursue public service. In my view, public service is the most noble human endeavor. Service to family. Service to church. Service to community. And service is a two way street. When you give you get back...in spades.

Jeanette Rankin would have liked these three points, and she would be delighted to see the opportunities available to women in Montana and America as we stand on the cusp of a new century.

And if you take one thing home with you this next week I hope it is the knowledge that you can do anything. That the limits to your future are only those you chose to place there.

After all, one of you may end up in the United States Senate. Because you see, that's what is so wonderful about the future.....anything is possible.

Thank you very much.

Author: Erin Casey at BAUCUS-DC
Date: 6/12/98 10:39 AM
Priority: Low
TO: Nancy Hadley
Subject: Re: Bio para for Max's picture book,

----- Message Contents -----

Bio for Erin Casey

I am originally from Nashville, Tennessee and I just graduated from Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts. At Williams I majored in History and minored in Women's Studies and Economics. I was an America Reads Tutor at the local elementary school and was an active member of the faculty-student Committee on Diversity and Community for three years. I am a 1997 Truman Scholar, and after this summer will most likely be working for a public interest law firm in Nashville. I am an avid hiker and reader, speak Spanish, and love to travel.

Reply Separator

Subject: Bio para for Max's picture book,
Author: Nancy Hadley at BAUCUS-DC
Date: 6/12/98 10:02 AM

Max keeps a picture book at his desk with staff photos and names. Would you please each do a paragraph on yourself. Where you're from, what college you're at, what year and major, interests, hobbies, extra curricular. maybe something about your parents/family if you're a mtn.
thanks, guys.
send via ccmail to me
let's put friday 6:00 pm deadline on it.
thanks, again.