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Q&A Pre-State of the Union Thoughts

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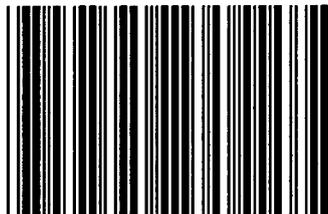
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BAUCUS

Q & A Pre-SOTU Thoughts
January 19, 1999

Q1. Tonight the President will deliver his state of the union address, what do you expect from that speech?

A1. Aside from the obvious issues that are facing us right now, we have a lot things to be grateful for in this country. The national economy is running smoothly, despite economic turmoil overseas. And we have a large budget surplus that we would like to use to shore up the Social Security system. So, the President deserves to take credit for the overall good state of the Union.

But I'm focused on the state of Montana and **getting back to business** to help our nation and state. And, as most folks in Montana will tell you, we in the Big Sky State aren't enjoying the economic boom that the rest of the country is experiencing. Our per capita income is near the bottom of the fifty states. And more and more people find they have to hold down two jobs just to make ends meet.

This year, I will focus on four goals to improve the state of our State. First, I am going to work to create jobs and bring the economic boom we are experiencing nationally home to Montana.

Second, I will place a major emphasis on education. We need to make sure our kids have a chance to compete in the global marketplace. In order to do that, we need to make sure we have good schools, with small class sizes, taught by excellent teachers.

Third, I'm going to make it one of my top priorities to ease the tough times of our ag producers. Last year, Montana farmers and ranchers suffered one of the toughest years yet. And we can't expect many of our family farms and ranches to make it much longer without some help. I have developed an agriculture plan, and will focus on knocking down trade barriers and installing a safety net to turn around our ag economy.

And finally, I am going to focus on the issues that are so important for Montana's quality of life. Increasing our hunting and fishing opportunities.

Making sure that rural Montanans have access to affordable health care.
And protecting social security for our seniors.

Yes, the state of our nation is good. And President Clinton deserves credit for much of that. But we need to continue to work together to improve the state of Montana. That means creating jobs, improving education and boosting agriculture, and protecting the Montana way of life. I pledge to do my utmost to accomplish each of these tasks this year.