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Funeral of Crow Tribal Chairman Carl Venne

Max S. Baucus

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Statement of Senator Max Baucus
Funeral of Crow Tribal Chairman Carl Venne
Thursday, February 19th, 2008
10:00 AM

We are here today to honor Carl because he meant something special to each of us. To Edwina and his family, he was a loving husband, father, and grandfather. To the Crow Nation, he was a respected Chairman. To me, Carl was many things—statesman, leader, veteran, advisor, and tireless advocate for the Crow Nation. Most importantly Carl was my friend.

Twice I invited Carl to Washington, DC, to testify before the Finance Committee—once on how methamphetamine use is affecting Montana and once on the reauthorization of the Indian Healthcare Improvement Act. At that first hearing on methamphetamine, Carl did something that really struck me. Carl had very insightful written statements prepared, but rather than read his statements, he asked if he could speak from the heart. It was moving testimony. Carl spoke passionately about the scourge of methamphetamine, how it was tearing apart families all across the Crow Nation, and how methamphetamine was poisoning the Crow Nation's most precious asset, its children. I heard the passion in Carl's voice, and I knew that he cared.

Carl's passion for making life better for the Crow people made it easy to work with him and even easier to like him. His heart was always in the right place. Whether working with him on the Crow Tribe's water compact or on the Indian Healthcare Improvement Act, portions of which were recently signed into law as part of the Jobs Bill, Carl had a vision for how to make the lives of the Crow people better.

Carl's vision and my admiration for him will live on. My thoughts and prayers are with Carl's family and the entire Crow Nation today. But we can take comfort in knowing that because of Carl, Montana is a better place. Our lives are richer for his service and friendship.