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University of Montana Native American Center

Max S. Baucus

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Senator * or Department*: **BAUCUS**

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* "required information"
Sun Bear of the Chippewa Tribe said:

"I do not think the measure of a civilization is how tall its buildings of concrete are. But rather how well its people have learned to relate to their environment and fellow man."

By any measure, the project that we are here to witness appears poised to be a success.
We are here to witness the groundbreaking of a unique building, the Native American Center. It promises to be a beautiful structure.

But more importantly, building the Center shows that the University has learned well how to relate to its environment and to our fellow man. The Center is the first of its kind on any United States campus. It will house the Native American studies department and the American Indian Student Services offices.
Congratulations to President Dennison and the University of Montana for their foresight. They have recognized the great worth of Native American studies. They have recognized the value of assisting Native American students in their pursuit of education.

Education is the key to success and a fulfilled life. As the world becomes more competitive, education is the factor that places people on an equal footing.
Education has been a priority both in my workings within the State of Montana and my time on the Hill. That's why I have written legislation to increase student loans, increase Pell grants, and increase funding for Tribal Colleges and Universities.

I have also advocated language immersion programs. These have been very successful here in Montana. Each year, President Bush has sought to cut funding for the Johnson-O’Malley program in his budget. And I am happy to say that I have successfully fought to have it restored.
And I am also an advocate for the Impact Aid Program. It is so important to Native Americans and the students whose parents are in the military.

The Native American Center here will provide an opportunity for scholarly research. It will provide a venue for teaching Native American Studies to Native and non-Native students alike. And it will provide a place for students and tribal leaders to gather.

The Center has been properly characterized as a "bridge for those of both Native American and mainstream cultures to explore the best that each has to offer."
Again, congratulations for your foresight. This is truly visionary.

May the learning here bolster understanding of the larger environment in which we all live. May the gatherings here strengthen bonds among Native Americans, and with people of all cultures. And may this Center fulfill every promise of success.