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A.W.A.R.E. Awards Banquet

Max S. Baucus

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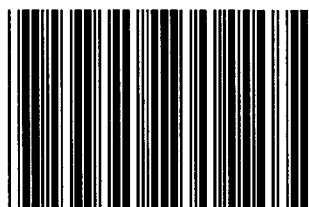
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BAUCUS

A.W.A.R.E. Awards Banquet

Introduction

Hello Everyone. Max Baucus here. I'm sorry I can't be with you in person but Senate business is keeping me in Washington D.C.

This is a very special event – it's a great opportunity to honor those who devote so much time, hard work, and dedication to helping folks with disabilities.

I want to say a special thank you to Larry Noonan, CEO of A.W.A.R.E. Larry, your tireless devotion is second to none. You help make dreams come true for Montanans all across our state. Thank you for all you do.

AWARE – Making a difference in Montana

I commend each and every one of you who work or volunteer your time for AWARE. All of you play such an important role in the lives of Montanans who are faced with mental, emotional or physical challenges. You all help to ensure that no matter what the challenges are that folks face, that they are able to lead healthy, happy and productive lives.

I was fortunate this summer to see some of AWARE's work first hand.

My good friend Jon Tester and I attended the housewarming for Pam and Lyle Whitmore in Bozeman. Due to the great work by AWARE and the Montana Home Choice Coalition, Pam and Lyle were able to achieve their life dream of owning their own home. It was really a wonderful day. It was great to see the smiles on their faces and the joy they're experiencing by having a home they can call their very own.

And that's just one example.

Every day AWARE provides quality community services for youth and adults, supported living, family support, Early Head Start, community mental health supports, outpatient psychiatric services, transportation services, and work services.

Conclusion

I'm an avid supporter of the work by AWARE. As chairman of the Senate Finance Committee I helped pass Mental Health Parity legislation to ensure that folks with mental illness and disabilities are treated the same way by insurance companies as folks with physical challenges.

I've been the leader on working to renew and expand CHIP – the children's health insurance program. You can count on me to continue to fight for that program next year as well.

I extend a hearty thank you to each and every one of you for all that you do. You are angels for so many in our state. And you can count on my continued support in Washington.

Keep up the good work.

All the best.