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"On Maintaining an Effective System of Education", Western Days

Max S. Baucus

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(1) Subject*: **Education**

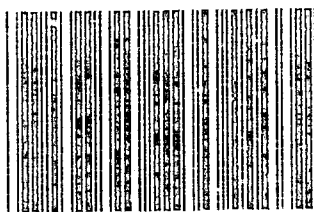
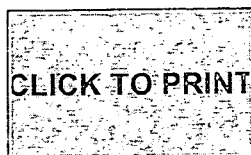
(select subject from controlled vocabulary, if your office has one)

(2) Subject* **Maintaining an Effective System of Education**

DOCUMENT DATE*: **10/12/1975**

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* "required information"



BAUCUS

Education

ON MAINTAINING AN EFFECTIVE
SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

AN ADDRESS BY

MAX BAUCUS

FOR

WESTERN DAYS, DILLON, MONTANA

OCTOBER 12, 1975

CUSTOM DICTATES THAT A SPEAKER IN MY
POSITION SHOULD PROFUSELY THANK HIS HOSTS FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO
ADDRESS THE GATHERING, WHETEHER OR NOT HE IS REALLY VERY EXCITED
TO BE STANDING ON THE SPEAKER'S PLATFORM. IN THIS CASE, HOWEVER,
I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN BY THANKING YOU FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY BECAUSE
I TRULY AM PLEASED AND HONORED TO BE HERE TO DISCUSS AN ISSUE WHICH
IS FUNDAMENTAL TO MY CONFIDENCE IN AMERICA. THAT ISSUE IS
EDUCATION.

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IN THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS OF LATE,
A VARIETY OF ISSUES HAVE BEEN DEBATED WITH SIDES BEING DRAWN BY
URBAN AND RURAL REPRESENTATIVES, INDUSTRIALISTS AND ENVIRONMENTALISTS,
CONSERVATIVES AND LIBERALS. THIS VARIETY OF ISSUES IS MATCHED BY
A UNIQUE BLEND OF SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES, WHOSE RANKS INCLUDE
DOCTORS, FARMERS, TEACHERS, MINISTERS, VETRINARIANS, LAWYERS,
AND MANY OTHER OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUNDS.

INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, HOWEVER, THE
FACT IS THAT EVERYONE IN CONGRESS HAS A BASELINE OF KNOWLEDGE
WITH WHICH HE CAN RELATE TO HIS COLLEAGUES AS A RESULT OF OUR
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. THIS RESERVOIR OF UNIVERSAL EXPERIENCE IS,
I FEEL, KEY TO THE SUCCESS WHICH WE AMERICANS HAVE EXPERIENCED
POLITICALLY AND IN A VARIETY OF FIELDS.

FOR EXAMPLE, ON THE FLOOR OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES JUST BEFORE CONGRESS ADJOURNED FOR THIS RECESS, A SPEAKER MADE A HUMOROUS REFERENCE TO THE "CHICKEN LITTLE" ATTITUDE OF SOME INDIVIDUALS. AND YOU SEE, DESPITE THE FACT THAT THIS GENTLEMAN WAS A NATIVE OF FLORIDA, HIS REFERENCE AND THE HUMOUR OF IT WERE CLEAR TO REPRESENTATIVES FROM MAINE TO ALASKA AND ALL POINTS IN BETWEEN. SIMILARILY, ACROSS THE CAPITOL BUILDING A SENATOR FROM UTAH WAS QUOTED AS SAYING, "NOW I'M SURE YOU RECALL FROM SCHOOL DAYS THAT OZONE IS A VERY EFFICIENT SCREEN . . ." ETCETERA.

OTHERS BEFORE ME HAVE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY AS A METHOD OF TRANSFERRING INFORMATION HAS BEEN OUTMODED SINCE THE INVENTION OF THE PRINTING PRESS. INDEED, IN OUR COMPUTER AGE, DATA CAN BE STORED, TRANSFERRED AND INTERPRETED INFINITELY FASTER THAN COULD EVER BE HOPED FOR IN A CLASSROOM. FOR THIS REASON, I HAVE ANOTHER BASIS FOR MY FAITH IN OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM.

THIS IS THE DYNAMO OF ENTHUSIASM WHICH IS CREATED WHENEVER HONESTLY INSPIRED TEACHERS AND DEDICATED STUDENTS JOIN TOGETHER. THIS UNDEFINABLE ELECTRICITY WHICH PULSES THROUGH OUR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS GIVES ME CONFIDENCE AND FAITH THAT WE, AS A PEOPLE, CAN RISE TO MEET AND OVERCOME THE PROBLEMS WHICH WE FACE.

IN SOME CIRCLES, FASHION DICTATES THAT THIS TYPE OF AN ATTITUDE IS NECESSARILY NAIVE OR, AT BEST, OVERLY SENTIMENTAL. I WILL TAKE MY RISKS ON BOTH COUNTS BECAUSE I SINCERELY FEEL THAT WE HAVE A RESERVOIR OF STRENGTH AND INGENUITY IN OUR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WHICH WE HAVE BARELY BEGUN TO TAP. INDEED, THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA DOES NOT REALLY HAVE AN ENERGY SHORTAGE. WE MAY BE SHORT ON GASOLINE AND OIL, BUT, IN INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS WESTERN MONTANA COLLEGE ALL OVER THIS COUNTRY, WE HAVE ENOUGH ENERGY TO POWER US OUT OF THIS AND A HUNDRED OTHER EQUAL CRISES IF WE ONLY BEGIN TO REALIZE IT.

THE PROBLEMS OF TODAY AND THOSE OF TOMORROW ARE GOING TO BE INCREASINGLY COMPLEX, OF COURSE. AS A RESULT, WE MUST RE-DOUBLE OUR EFFERTS TO MAINTAIN THE TRIED AND PROVEN ELEMENTS OF EDUCATION, WHILE NOT SHRINKING FROM THE SEARCH FOR NEW AND CHALLENGING FRONTIERS OF INQUIRY. THIS IS NOT EASY WORK.

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AS A MATTER OF FACT, LIKE ANY ADVENTURE THE EXPLORATION OF NEW METHODS AND AREAS OF STUDY MAY EVEN BE FRIGHTENING, BUT I AM ENCOURAGED BY THE WORDS OF PRESIDENT HARRY TRUMAN WHO ONCE SAID THAT, "THE WORK OF THE WORLD DOESN'T GET DONE BY THE BELLYACHERS." AND, AS PRESIDENT TRUMAN PROVED, ANY PERSON WITH GOOD SENSE, INTELLIGENCE AND DILIGENCE CAN MAKE IT TO THE TOP.

IN THIS REGARD, I AM PLEASED BY THE EFFORTS MADE IN MONTANA TO REFOCUS PRIORITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION. DIVERSITY IN AREAS OF CONCENTRATION IS BEING PROVIDED FOR THE STUDENT WHILE THE CORE OF BASELINE KNOWLEDGE, TO WHICH I ALLUDED EARLIER, IS MAINTAINED. PERHAPS IN THIS WAY WE CAN BEGIN TO ANSWER THIS NATION'S NEED FOR WELL-ROUNDED ARTISANS, SPECIALISTS, AND TECHNOLOGISTS.

AS I SAID BEFORE, CHANGES AND CHALLENGES OF THIS SORT CAN BE PAINFUL, AS THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH WESTERN MONTANA COLLEGE ARE ALL TOO AWARE. DESPITE THE RUMBLINGS WHICH HAVE OCCURED OVER THE LAST YEAR TO CLOSE WESTERN AND MONTANA TECH, I AM CONFIDENT THAT WITH INNOVATIVE ADMINISTRATION AND PROVOCATIVE INSTRUCTION, THE GREAT TRADITION OF THIS COLLEGE WILL BE CARRIED FORWARD. FURTHERMORE, WHILE IT IS NOT MY PLACE AS A FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE TO TELL THE STATE HOW TO RUN ITS AFFAIRS, I WILL PLEDGE MY EFFORTS TO INSURING THE FUTURE OF WESTERN.

INNOVATION AND DEDICATION CAN ONLY CARRY AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION SO FAR, HOWEVER, AND AT THAT POINT GOOD, SOLID CASH ENTERS THE PICTURE. IT IS HERE THAT I BELIEVE THAT CONGRESS HAS FAILED TO MEET ITS RESPONSIBILITIES. FOR WHILE I THINK THAT THE PRIMARY OBLIGATION FOR FUNDING HIGHER EDUCATION RESTS WITH THE STATES, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MUST ALSO PLAY ITS PART.

NONETHELESS, CONGRESS IS FACING A REAL DILEMMA IN THE AREA OF FEDERAL AID TO EDUCATION. THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION, LIKE THE ONE BEFORE IT, CONTINUES TO INSIST THAT THERE IS NO REAL NEED FOR, OR ROOM IN, THE BUDGET FOR ADDITIONAL AID TO INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION. THE PRESIDENT, I AM SURE, WOULD VETO ANY BILL THAT WOULD PROVIDE FUNDS FOR WHICH STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS COULD APPLY FOR GENERAL ASSISTANCE.

THERE ARE FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR THE EXPANSION OF LIBRARIES, THE UP-GRADING OF LANGUAGE LABORATORIES, THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW CLASSROOM BUILDINGS, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW RESEARCH PROGRAMS. BUT WHAT HAPPENS TO THE INSTITUTION OR SYSTEM WHICH FACES A DROP OF ENROLLMENT OR SIMILAR CRISES, AND BECAUSE OF ADVERSE ECONOMIC EVENTS SIMPLY DOES NOT HAVE THE MONEY TO STAY ON ITS FEET?

THE ANSWER GIVEN TODAY IS "CENTRALIZE YOUR SERVICES, CUT YOUR EXPENSES", AND POSSIBLY, "CLOSE YOUR DOORS". WELL, PERHAPS EXPENSES CAN BE CUT, PROGRAMS CAN BE STREAMLINED, BUT I DO NOT THINK THAT ANYONE IN WASHINGTON CAN REASONABLY TELL THE SCHOOL SYSTEMS OF EACH INDIVIDUAL STATE WHAT TO KEEP OPEN AND WHAT TO CLOSE.

IN A SITUATION SUCH AS THIS, I PREFER TO LEAVE THE DECISION-MAKING UP TO STATE AND LOCAL INSTITUTIONS WHICH CAN BE MORE EFFECTIVELY TAILORED TO MEET EACH STATE'S PARTICULAR NEEDS. CONSEQUENTLY, I FAVOR MORE FLEXIBLE FUNDING AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL WHICH CAN BE MADE ACCOMMODATE THE PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN ALL SECTORS OF OUR NATION.

FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN A HURRICANE OR TORNADO STRIKES AN AREA, HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS ARE SUDDENLY AVAILABLE FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE BY SIMPLY DECLARING A STATE OF EMERGENCY. BUT WHEN A UNIVERSITY OF COLLEGE FACES A CRISIS SITUATION IN WHICH SOME ASPECTS OF OUR FUTURE ARE AT STAKE, WHERE ARE THE DOLLARS?

IN ESSENCE, THE PROBLEM WHICH WE HAVE CONSIDERED TODAY IS SIMPLE. HOW DO WE MAINTAIN EDUCATION, PARTICULARLY AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL, AS A VIABLE AND INTEGRAL COMPONENT OF OUR SOCIETY? THE ANSWER IS MORE COMPLEX, BUT I REMAIN POSITIVE THAT WITH A CONCERTED EFFORT BY STUDENTS, ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNMENT, THIS WELL-SPRING OF OUR NATION'S VITALITY AND PROSPERITY WILL STRENGTHEN AND GROW.

THANK YOU.