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Edward D. Madigan Swearing-in, [3/7/91]

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**PROPOSED TALKING POINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT
AT THE SWEARING-IN CEREMONY OF
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE EDWARD R. MADIGAN**

- o We are gathered here today for the swearing-in of our next Secretary of Agriculture, Ed Madigan. American agriculture faces many challenges in the years ahead and I know it will be in good hands with Ed Madigan at the helm.

- o In considering Ed, several ideas seem to stand out: They are honor, knowledge, and foresight. Anyone who knows Ed well will tell you that his word is his bond. If he tells you something's going to be a certain way, then that's the way it's going to be. You can count on it. And I know our farmers put a lot of stock in honesty and integrity. That's one of the reasons I picked him.

- o The second reason is his knowledge of the complex issues in American agriculture today. Ed has spent 16 of his 18 years in Congress on the Agriculture Committee -- eight as ranking Republican. In that time, he has worked on five farm bills and important dairy legislation, which comes to about one major piece of farm legislation every three years. All of that makes him one of the most knowledgeable people in this country when it comes to agriculture.

- o And perhaps most importantly, Ed has the foresight and the vision to lead American agriculture into the next century. He knows where we need to go in the areas of trade, in helping American farmers become better able to take advantage of market opportunities, in opening up new markets for our agricultural products, in pursuing alternative and cleaner fuels such as ethanol, and in doing our part to preserve and protect the environment. In all of these things Ed has shown great leadership.

- o I'm sure everyone here is familiar with his outstanding tenure as a member of Congress. He has had a tremendous impact on the shaping of public policy. The list of things he has accomplished just in the past year is truly, truly impressive -- helping to fashion the 1990 Farm Bill, a complex piece of legislation that gives farmers more flexibility in their planting decisions, and which helps to open up new markets, and which make farmers -- at an unprecedented level -- partners in safeguarding our precious environment.

- o He has led efforts to provide a safety net for farm income and to expand export markets. He has fought for and participated in legislation to stabilize the Rural Electrification Administration revolving fund; to give the Farmers Home Administration more flexibility to work with farmers in financial difficulty; to provide incentives for conservation practices in cultivation; and to distribute excess commodities to charitable organizations

for dispensing to the needy.

- o He was ranking Republican member of the Agriculture Committee, which has jurisdiction over our diverse agricultural programs, and considers legislation dealing with food safety, land grant colleges, many foreign trade programs, food stamps, food labeling, and much more. In short, his experience in all of these areas is vast. That's why I know we can count on him to do a great job as Secretary of Agriculture.

- o As a senior member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, Ed Madigan has shaped numerous legislative initiatives that have helped farmers in many different ways. For instance, the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 included Madigan-sponsored provisions that encourage the use of alternative fuels, such as ethanol, which can be made from corn. These provisions will create an expanded market of at least 750 million gallons of ethanol annually by the year 1995. That's an additional 300 million bushels of corn!

- o In Congress, he has represented the 15th Congressional District in Illinois, which encompasses some of the nation's most fertile farm country. Before that he served three terms in the Illinois House of Representatives. In the area where he grew up, agriculture is the economy. The local paper does

not have a business page; it has a farm page.

- o Ed grew up watching farmers struggle during bad times and keep their fingers crossed in good times. He learned to appreciate their hard work and knew at an early age that farming can be a very risky business.
- o Most of all, he learned that American agriculture is a modern miracle and that America's farmers are the most productive in the world. They have overcome adversity, year after year, through drought and natural disaster, to bring forth a bounty from the land. He knows that through it all, they have never lost that pioneering spirit, that solid sense of self-reliance that is the hallmark of the American farmer.
- o Still, he knows that no matter how self-reliant our farmers are, they are in no position as individuals to compete against the treasuries of foreign governments, or deal with, for instance, the fifth year of a drought. So he is well aware that there is and will continue to be a legitimate role for government as we work in partnership with America's farmers to insure a safe, abundant and affordable food supply.
- o The time has come to insist that our farmers and ranchers have access to the agricultural markets of the world, and that they be allowed to compete

on a fair and equitable basis with other exporting nations. Those are our goals in the Uruguay Round of the Multilateral trade talks recently resumed in Geneva.

- o He'll be working closely with our Trade Representative Carla Hills to make sure our objectives in agriculture are achieved at the crucial GATT negotiations. And as you know, agriculture is central to these very important trade talks. We're working to level the playing field for America's farmers, to provide greater economic growth and prosperity, and this Administration is committed to doing whatever it takes to achieve it!
- o Having helped to write the 1990 Farm Bill, he is well prepared for the sheer volume of work that will be required to implement the new farm legislation. Much of that work has already been undertaken, but a considerable portion remains.
- o He believes that it is very important to focus on minimizing the regulatory and paperwork burden on farmers to the greatest extent possible. Ed is well aware that reducing complexity and simplifying farm program details will be a significant benefit to our farmers.
- o When it comes to protecting the environment, he believes that the

Secretary of Agriculture should be the voice of the farmer, seeking to find the proper balance between environmental goals and the dietary needs of our people.

- o Along the way, Ed has received numerous honors in his years of service to this country. He was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree by Lincoln College in Illinois. And both James Millikin University and Illinois Wesleyan University have conferred Honorary Doctor of Laws degrees. In the process, he and his beautiful wife, Evelyn, have raised three fine daughters.
- o Ed has provided great leadership in the Congress, and I know he'll supply the leadership and the vision necessary to take this Department into the next Century. He sees the future of agriculture, not as a stagnant economic sector reliant on the government for a handout, but as a powerful engine of economic growth.
- o Most importantly, Ed has always been the farmers' best friend. And America can consider itself very lucky that we have a man of this caliber to lead the Department of Agriculture. Now, the oath of office.

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