



## **Montana's Democrat governor calls constituents white, racist rednecks**

**August 8, 2012 by Rob Bluey**

Montana Gov. Brian Schweitzer wowed the Democratic National Convention four years ago with a talk that Time called a “folksy, tough, funny, home-run of a speech.” It was the kind of performance that generated enough buzz to propel talk of a presidential run in 2016.

Schweitzer's oratorical gift earned him an invite to Ohio Democratic Party State Convention last month. It was there, during his keynote address, that Schweitzer let the Midwesterners know his true feelings about his constituents back home. Dustin Hurst at Montana Watchdog has the scoop:

Through his 30-minute speech to Ohio Democrats, Schweitzer repeatedly boasted of his gubernatorial achievements, putting special emphasis on the Indian Education for All project. Schweitzer spearheaded the program, which requires Montana school children to learn both American-Indian and U.S. history.

Why did Schweitzer shepherd the innovative and groundbreaking program? Well, because Montanans are a bunch of white, racist rednecks – the governor's words.

“All over Montana, you can walk into a bar, a café or even a school or a courthouse and just listen for a while as people talk to each other,” Schweitzer explained, shortly after noting 93 percent of his state's population is classified as Caucasian. “And you will hear somebody, before very long, say something outrageously racist about the people who've lived in Montana for 10,000 years.”

The governor delivered the program to sway the minds and hearts of Treasure State youngsters. “So, I decided, I can't turn the heart of a 45-year-old redneck,” Schweitzer said.

Video of the speech was posted by Lauren Michelle Kinsey on the a liberal Ohio blog called Plunderbund. Kinsey gushed about Schweitzer's speech. “Listening to his speech brought tears to my eyes,” she wrote. Kinsey then implored her readers to view it: “This

video is a half hour long, but it's worth watching. Much more entertaining and meaningful than a TV show..."

Unfortunately, the video is currently unavailable, marked "private" on YouTube. That probably has something to do with Montana Watchdog's scoop.

Schweitzer, who took office in 2005 and was reelected in a landslide, has a positive approval rating in his state. He's known for clashing with the Republican-controlled legislature, often using his veto pen. He was among the top-rated governors by the Cato Institute in its 2010 report card on state chief executives. Schweitzer earned a "B," which landed him in tie for eighth on the list. (Interestingly, that's the same spot Cato ranked Texas Gov. Rick Perry.)

So was Schweitzer pandering to the crowd or was he sincere in his remarks?

It certainly isn't the first time he put his foot in his mouth. Schweitzer told the Daily Beast in April that Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney has roots in "a polygamy commune in Mexico." When pressed on the issue by CNN's Anderson Cooper, Schweitzer refused to apologize.

There's no word yet from Montana how the governor will respond to the latest controversy.