



Opening Statement of Sen. Chuck Grassley for Financing Roundtable
Tuesday, May 12, 2009

Mr. Chairman, politics are driven by polls. Some follow them. Some do not. I'll bet if you polled every member of Congress – asking them what they think would be the hardest part of health care reform – they probably would say “figuring out how to pay for it.” If you asked me, I would say finding ways to pay for health care reform is going to be the hardest. So here we are. As the top tax-writers in the Senate, it appears that we have our work cut out for us. I thank you for your leadership in trying to answer these tough questions.

I do want to start this important process with some questions of my own. What are the most appropriate financing tools available to us? Should we look to non-health-related measures? Or should we stick to health-related measures?

Now let me answer those questions. Consistent with our interest in looking at all of the options out there, I think it's appropriate to look at both. But I will emphasize that I do not agree with all of the non-health-related measures we will examine. But that does not mean that we can't talk about them. I also want to emphasize this – President Obama is going to be a key player in health care reform. President Obama has to show leadership if he wants to pay for health care reform. For example, there may be some financing measures that the Senate may agree on. Our friends in the House of Representatives, however, may not agree with the Senate. So it may come down to the President's leadership. The President's leadership is not only essential in finding ways to pay for health care reform, the President's leadership also is key if we want to get health care reform done this year.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman. And my thanks to our panelists for participating in this all-important roundtable.

