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HATCH STATEMENT AT FINANCE COMMITTEE MARKUP ON TAX EXTENDERS LEGISLATION

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee, today delivered the following opening statement at a committee markup on the *Family and Business Tax Cut Certainty Act of 2012*:

The explosion of temporary tax provisions in recent years has been a very notable and problematic trend. The number of temporary tax provisions has grown from 42 in 1998 to 154 in 2011. If you average that number out, you will find that, over that 13 year period, Congress was adding almost 9 extenders per year.

To those of us who have been members of this committee for a while, that number may seem low. The reason it may seem low is that we re-visit these same issues year-after-year. We need to break out of that rut. My friend the Chairman has often said we need to get away from being an *extenders Congress* or a *maintenance Congress*. And I agree.

We should not continue extending provisions in a stop-and-go fashion.

You cannot find many people who believe Congress should continue dealing with tax extenders in a business as usual manner. And this markup is not business as usual. The Chairman's mark reverses the trend on extenders. The tide is turning. For the first time in my 21 years on this committee, we are deliberately moving in the opposite direction. The Chairman's mark reduces the number of extenders by over 25 percent. The number of extenders potentially addressed in the Chairman's mark was 73. The modified mark we consider today addresses only 52 of those.

That means that we have dropped 21 extenders. And by my count that is a big step in the right direction. To be sure, it cannot be the only step. This has to be a first step.

Am I satisfied with the number of drops? The answer is emphatically no. I would like to drop more. And I appreciate those on the committee who have worked hard to trim this list back even further. Even if all of that work does not yield fruit today, I expect that it will in the future.

But the consensus among members of the committee is not that aggressive. Much of the debate today will illustrate the tough balance that was struck with the Chairman's mark. Members on both sides filed dozens of amendments to add back extenders, and we will see some members seeking to add back dropped items. We will see others seeking to strike items that were retained.

I am hopeful that where the committee lands today is just a starting point and that the list of dropped extenders will only grow as we move on to the next stages in the legislative process.

Today's markup is important for another reason. On a very limited basis, it is a dry run for the fundamental tax reform that we all know must come, and will come, in the near future. All members will, with sincerity, say they want fundamental tax reform. Today, we will see just how difficult it is to have even a limited reform exercise.

Disappointment in not eliminating more extenders today does not mean we should pull back from our future efforts on fundamental tax reform. Rather, it shows that we need to double down on those efforts.

Nearly all economists tell us a reformed system with a broader base and lower rates will lead to more growth, more jobs, and a better standard of living for our children and grandchildren.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for today's efforts. We can send a positive signal today by providing greater certainty to families and businesses across America about our tax code. And, importantly, we can give an indication that the Finance Committee is prepared to tackle fundamental tax reform to simplify and update our archaic tax rules.

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