



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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For Immediate Release
Tuesday, May 13, 2003

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SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE MARKUP ON BUDGET RECONCILIATION BILL

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before we begin with the mark-up tonight, I would like to take a moment to honor our late colleague, Senator Russell Long. I was honored to have the chance to attend his funeral services today and to extend my condolences to his family in person.

As former Chairman of this Committee, Senator Long leaves behind a powerful and influential legacy. His personality and wit, along with his interest and knowledge of the intricacies of the tax code was admirable. It was an honor to have served for nearly ten of the 36 years that Senator Long was a member of the Senate. His contributions to this Committee and to the Congress as a whole will continue to resonate for decades to come.

I would now like to move to the reason we are here tonight. Unfortunately, because of the way that the Committee reported this bill last week, we ran into procedural problems. And that requires us to deal with the bill again.

The Majority wants to use fast-track procedures — called reconciliation — for this tax bill. If Senators seek to utilize these special procedures, they must scrupulously follow the rules.

Many in the Senate believe that the use of reconciliation for actions that increase the deficit is an inappropriate use of the process. That is all the more reason for us to ensure that the Committee scrupulously adheres to the rules. The Senate must follow its rules. Especially when we are considering an expedited bill.

As the Committee will report the same bill today that it reported last week, I hope my Colleagues will not offer amendments. The Committee has expressed its will on this bill. There is no need for us to air again all of the same disputes.