



For Immediate Release
May 12, 2009

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**BAUCUS COMMENTS ON 2009 TRUSTEES REPORT
ON SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDICARE STATUS**

Finance Chairman says report confirms urgency of health care reform

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) issued the below statement today after reviewing the latest report on the financial outlook for Social Security and Medicare from those programs’ Board of Trustees. The Medicare report indicated that solvency of the program remains threatened by annual increases in the cost of health care and falling consumer prices as a result of the economic recession. The Social Security report revealed that Social Security can still pay full benefits for almost three decades, until 2037. Similar to Medicare, however, the current recession combined with improving life expectancy of U.S. citizens hampered Social Security’s long-run finances relative to last year’s forecast.

“There is a direct connection between the rising cost of health care and the long-term stability of the Medicare program, and this report underscores the urgency of action on comprehensive health care reform this year. One of my most important goals for health reform is to reduce the skyrocketing costs that are hurting families, business, and the Medicare program. As costs continue to rise, the Medicare program so important to so many American families is put in jeopardy,” said Baucus. **“This report shows us that our economic recovery effort is just as pressing today as it was six months ago. It shows us that a strong and full recovery is essential to preventing further erosion to Medicare and to protecting our long-run finances so that our children and grandchildren can count on these vital programs just like millions of Americans do today.”**

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