

United States Senate
Committee on Finance



Sen. Chuck Grassley • Iowa
Ranking Member

<http://finance.senate.gov>
Press_Office@finance-rep.senate.gov

Contact: Jill Kozeny, 202/224-1308
Jill Gerber, 202/224-6522

MEMORANDUM

TO: Reporters and Editors
RE: Health Care Negotiations
DA: Tuesday, September 15, 2009

Senator Chuck Grassley, ranking member of the Senate Committee on Finance, released the following statement on health care reform negotiations among the six key members of the Finance Committee.

“Over the last several months the bipartisan group of six senators has worked diligently to develop a bipartisan bill for the Finance Committee to consider.

“I applaud the efforts Chairman Baucus has made to provide a venue for us to work together toward bipartisan legislation that we all can support, and we’ll continue to work with him and Senators Conrad and Bingaman -- and any other members interested in real bipartisan reforms -- as the process moves forward.

“Unfortunately, we’re operating under an artificial deadline set by the Democratic leadership and the White House. I’m disappointed because it looks like we’re being pushed aside by the Democratic leadership so the Senate can move forward on a bill that, up to this point, does not meet the shared goals for affordable, accessible health coverage that we set forth when this process began. In addition to concerns about costs to taxpayers and affordability for individuals, there are still some serious outstanding issues that have yet to be resolved like preventing taxpayer funding of abortion services and the enforcement against subsidies for illegal aliens. I have also pressed for alternatives to the individual mandate and ways to lower the overall cost of the bill, as well as tougher medical liability reform measures.

“On top of all that, there’s no guarantee that a Finance Committee bill, even if it becomes bipartisan, will stay that way after it leaves the committee. An overriding issue for some time has been the fact that members of the Democratic leadership haven’t made a commitment to back a broad bipartisan bill through the entire process.

“We’ve been clear from the start that we’re willing to stay at the table. There’s no reason not to keep working until we get it right. In the end, legislation that impacts every American should have strong bipartisan support.”