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## **BAUCUS SAYS TANF REAUTHORIZATION PRESENTS OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN PROGRAM, HELP FAMILIES FIND WORK**

*Finance Chairman: We Need to Make Sure People Aren't Falling Through the Cracks*

**Washington, DC** – In a Senate Finance Committee hearing held today, Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) said reauthorizing the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program ahead of its expiration on September 30 presents an opportunity to strengthen the program so that it helps families regardless of the overall economic climate. Baucus noted that TANF did not expand in response to the recession like other programs did because of the sheer number of people simultaneously looking for work.

**“The American people are our greatest national resource, so as a nation, we cannot afford to leave anyone behind. TANF fights poverty through job training and education, and we have an opportunity to strengthen the program as we work toward a reauthorization,”** Baucus said. **“Other safety-net programs responded to the recession by expanding and meeting families’ needs, but TANF did not. We certainly want to see the numbers of TANF recipients decrease, but we want it to be for the right reason – because people are finding work. We need to make sure people aren’t falling through the cracks without assistance or without a job.”**

Nearly 50 million Americans are currently living in poverty, including 16 million children. In 2009, more than 31 percent of working families were in poverty. While other safety net programs expanded during the recession to guarantee families were fed and had access to medical care, TANF did not expand similarly. In fact, the number of people receiving TANF assistance has dropped as some states cut caseloads, but people are not necessarily rising out of poverty.

At the hearing, Baucus underscored the need for a strong safety net that responds effectively regardless of the economy’s status. TANF expires on September 30, and Baucus said Congress should keep that need for a strong safety net in mind as it works to reauthorize the program.

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