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## **BAUCUS, HATCH LAUD FINANCE COMMITTEE ACTION ON PROPOSALS TO STRENGTHEN & IMPROVE CHILD WELFARE IN AMERICA**

*Bipartisan Package Better Protects Children & Youth; Sails through Senate Panel*

**WASHINGTON** – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) and Ranking Member Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) today applauded Committee action on a bipartisan package of legislative proposals to improve child welfare in America. *The Supporting At-Risk Children Act* strengthens and renews adoption incentive and foster care policies; works to combat child sex trafficking; and improves the collection of meaningful child support payments from noncustodial parents living overseas.

The Chairman’s Mark, which was favorably reported out of the Committee overwhelmingly by voice vote, included key provisions from Baucus that address increased permanency options for kids in foster care, creates a National Advisory Committee on Domestic Sex Trafficking to disseminate best practices, and child support enforcement provisions that help collect funds for tribal children and promote responsible fatherhood. The mark also contains key elements from Hatch’s bill, S. 1518, the Improving Outcomes for Youth At Risk for Sex Trafficking, IO YOUTH. The measure further draws from a number of bipartisan proposals, including trafficking legislation (S. 1118) sponsored by Senators Ron Wyden (D-Wis.) and Rob Portman (R-Ohio) as well as child support legislation introduced by Senators Robert Menendez (S. 508) and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa.)

**“The most important factors in a child’s life are a strong family and supportive community. Unfortunately, too many of America’s children lack this vital support network,”** Senator Baucus said. **“When families struggle, oftentimes it is the child welfare system that steps in to help. The legislation this committee approved today will go a long way towards strengthening America’s child welfare system. This Committee’s work on adoption and guardianship, trafficking, and child support will go a long way towards helping kids to get the resources they need. It will restore hope, strengthen families, and support America’s future generations.”**

**“Given the challenges plaguing America’s child welfare and foster care systems, today the Finance Committee acted in a bipartisan way with smart policies that will better protect and improve the well-being of our nation’s most vulnerable children,”** said Senator Hatch. **“These proposals – from improving adoption assistance to taking steps to put to an end to domestic youth sex trafficking – will help foster a safer environment for our young people to put them on a path to leading happy, healthy, and successful lives. I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure these policies are enacted into law.”**

The Senate Finance Committee has jurisdiction over grants to states that provide aid and services to families in need of child welfare services, foster care, or adoption assistance. A summary of the Chairman's Mark of the Supporting At-Risk Children Act can be found [HERE](#).

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