COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
NEWS RELEASE
Max Baucus, Chairman
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BAUCUS COMMENT ON THE PATIENTS' CHOICE ACT

Finance Chairman pleased with agreement in many areas of health care reform

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) commented today on the Patients' Choice Act of 2009, a health care reform bill introduced by Senators Tom Coburn, M.D. (R-OK) and Richard Burr (R-NC). Baucus is one of the Senate's leading advocates of health reform. He held more than a dozen hearings and a day-long summit on the topic before authoring a blueprint for reform last year. Together with Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), he has released three policy option papers that will inform the creation of a bipartisan Chairman's Mark of comprehensive health care reform legislation that is expected to be released and considered by the Committee in June. Baucus said today he was heartened by the broad bipartisan agreement the Patients' Choice Act illustrates.

"I'm thrilled there is such broad support for health care reform. The Patients' Choice Act embraces several ideas that meet my goals of lowering health care costs and expanding access to health care," said Baucus. **"We clearly have shared objectives in increasing focus on prevention and wellness, creating insurance pools to lower costs, improving access to health care coverage, and preventing insurance companies from denying coverage to sick individuals. Where I part ways with this proposal is in eliminating the tax incentives for employer-provided health care benefits, which would destroy the employer-based health care system we have today. I want Americans to be able to keep the plan they have if they choose to do so, and eliminating those incentives could erode that choice. But what's clear is that this bill recognizes the fundamental flaws that exist in our health care system and the urgent need to correct them. I look forward to working with my colleagues and considering their ideas as the health reform process moves forward."**

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