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FINANCE COMMITTEE APPROVES TAX COURT, INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION NOMINEES

Baucus: "Nominees Have a Wealth of Experience and Important Roles to Fill"

WASHINGTON – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) applauded the committee's unanimous approval today of three nominations: Joseph Nega to serve on the U.S. Tax Court; Judge Michael Thornton to serve a second term on the U.S. Tax Court; and Scott Kieff to be a member of the U.S. International Trade Commission.

"These nominees have a wealth of experience and important roles to fill protecting taxpayers and fighting for U.S. businesses and workers," Senator Baucus said.

Judge Michael Thornton has served on the U.S. Tax Court since 1998, including as chief judge from June 2012 to March 2013. He previously served in the Treasury Department between 1995 and 1998 as deputy tax legislative counsel in the Office of Tax Policy, as well as attorney-adviser. From 1988 to 1995, he served on the House Ways and Means Committee staff first as tax counsel, then as chief minority tax counsel. He also has experience in the private sector. Judge Thornton received a B.S. and M.S. from University of Southern Mississippi, an M.A. from University of Tennessee, and a J.D. from Duke University School of Law.

Joseph Nega is a 28-year veteran staff member of the Joint Committee on Taxation. He currently serves as senior legislation counsel. From 1989 to 2008 he was legislation counsel, and from 1985 to 1989 he was legislation attorney. Nega received a B.S.C. in Accounting from DePaul University, a J.D. from DePaul University School of Law, and an M.L.T. (taxation) from Georgetown University School of Law.

The United States Tax Court hears a variety of tax law-related cases and gives taxpayers a dedicated venue to dispute IRS claims. As judges on the Tax Court, Thornton and Nega would help ensure the fair administration of the nation's tax laws.

"Judge Thornton has done an excellent job during his first term on the U.S. Tax Court, and his nomination for a second term is well deserved," Senator Baucus said. **"Joseph Nega has exactly the background and experience we need on the Tax Court, and I am confident he will make an excellent judge."**

Scott Kieff is a professor at The George Washington University Law School and a Ray and Louis Knowles Senior Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, where he directs the Project on Commercializing Innovation and serves on the Property Rights Task Force. He served as a member of the Patent Public Advisory Committee of the United States Patent and Trademark Office from 2007 to 2010. From 2005 to 2007, he was a mediator in the appellate mediation program of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. He also has private sector experience. Kieff received a B.S. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. As a member of the ITC, Kieff will help enforce U.S. trade laws and protect U.S. jobs from unfair practices and intellectual property theft.

"Scott Kieff is well qualified to serve on the International Trade Commission," Senator Baucus said. **"As Congress moves forward with an ambitious trade agenda, we will look to the ITC to enforce our trade laws fairly and objectively."**

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