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BAUCUS URGES CONFIRMATION OF HEALTH, PENSION NOMINEES

*Finance Chair Says Nominees Will Help Americans Understand Health Reform Law,
Protect Americans' Pensions*

Washington, DC - Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) commented today following a Finance Committee hearing to consider the nominations of Joshua Gotbaum to be Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) and Richard Sorian to be Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Baucus said confirming these nominees is important to ensuring critical departments of the federal government have the resources they need to protect Americans' pensions during the economic crisis and ensure Americans have accurate, reliable information about the new health care reform law.

"If confirmed, these nominees will arrive in the Administration at a crucial time for our health care and retiree benefit systems," said Baucus. **"As the health care reform law is implemented, Americans will need honest, reliable answers in plain English from HHS about the new law and how it affects their daily lives. Mr. Sorian's work on health care and as a journalist makes him an ideal choice for this role and I look forward to working with him. As our country begins to recover from the economic crisis, it will become even more important for the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation to protect the pensions and livelihoods of Americans. Mr. Gotbaum's experience helping manage and advise American companies and nonprofits, and leading a regional airline through a successful bankruptcy and restructuring, prepare him well for this job."**

Baucus stressed the important role the PBGC needs to play in protecting the retirement incomes of more than 44 million American workers in more than 29,000 private-sector defined benefit pension plans. Previously, Mr. Gotbaum, who is currently an Operating Partner at Blue Wolf Capital, has served at the Office of Management and Budget and the U.S. Treasury. He also served as the first CEO of The September 11th Trust Fund – a nonprofit fund with over \$500 million in assets.

Baucus also stressed to Mr. Sorian the importance of providing clear information without jargon or spin about health care reform. Baucus discussed with Sorian new, innovative ways to reach all sectors of the public with important information about health reform. As the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, Sorian would direct public information from HHS and be responsible for helping Americans navigate and understand the benefits of the new health care reform legislation. He would also direct outreach about pandemic events and public health emergencies. Mr. Sorian currently serves as Adviser to the Secretary at the Department of Health and Human Services and previously served in the Department under Secretary Shalala. He has also worked at the National Committee for Quality Assurance, the Center for Studying Health System Change and as the editor of a national health care trade journal, and has authored three books.

Opening statements and full video footage of today's hearing may viewed on the Finance Committee website here: <http://www.finance.senate.gov/sitepages/hearings.htm>.

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