



# Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### BAUCUS BUDGET AMENDMENTS FOCUS ON U.S. COMPETITIVENESS *FY2007 budget should improve education, innovation, long-range economic planning*

*Washington, DC* – U.S. Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.), Ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, plans to file four amendments to the FY2007 budget resolution designed to boost America's economic competitiveness. Baucus, a longtime champion of policy changes to maintain and increase U.S. economic leadership in the world, is seeking to expand the scope of a "competitiveness reserve fund" in the Chairman's budget resolution to provide funds for trade and health care initiatives that increase America's economic viability. Baucus's other amendments request full funding for the National Science Foundation, boost support for Native American education and health care, and express a "sense of the Senate" on the urgency of competitiveness issues from education and energy to trade and international tax.

**"Budgets lay the foundation for America's economic future, and that foundation's strength or weakness entirely depends on the priorities we choose,"** said Baucus. **"This budget has to do more than acknowledge the importance of increasing America's global competitiveness. It needs a stronger dollars-and-cents commitment to that goal."**

A competitiveness reserve fund currently in the budget resolution provides funds for legislation that would improve American competitiveness. The first Baucus amendment expands the Committee-reported provision to include deficit-neutral trade competitiveness and enforcement, health care IT and pay-for-performance legislation reported by the Finance Committee.

Research funding in the United States has fallen substantially in the past decades, especially publicly-funded basic research in science and engineering. The National Science Foundation (NSF) Authorization Act of 2002 called for a doubling of NSF funding by 2007, but actual funding has fallen far short. A second Baucus amendment fully funds NSF at the amount promised in 2002: \$9.8 billion, or \$4 billion more than the president's allocation for this year.

Allowing any American community to fall behind reduces our overall competitiveness, so another Baucus amendment champions the Native American community. It restores funding to three major Indian education initiatives: \$24 million to the Johnson O'Malley program for students age three through twelfth grade, \$114.9 million to BIA and Tribal colleges and scholarships, and \$9.9 million for Native language studies through Health and Human Services.

Baucus's final "sense of the Senate" amendment outlines key issues Congress must address to improve U.S. competitiveness. These range from trade and energy, on which Baucus has already introduced legislation this year, to savings, education, research and innovation, international tax, and health. This Thursday, Baucus will introduce the Savings Competitiveness Act of 2006. That bill will help Americans increase their retirement savings and investment, and will include tough pay-go provisions for Congress. Baucus, whose amendments are deficit-neutral, has also identified stronger pay-go rules as a priority for this week's budget and debt limit debates.

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