



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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For Immediate Release
Wednesday, April 19, 2006

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BAUCUS CONDEMNS RECESS APPOINTMENTS OF PUBLIC TRUSTEES FOR SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDICARE PROGRAMS

*White House ignores proper oversight role of Congress,
breaks precedent by renominating former officials*

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.), Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee, released the following statement today after the recess appointments of John L. Palmer and Thomas R. Savings as public trustees of the Social Security and Medicare programs. Palmer and Savings have both already served one term each as Social Security and Medicare public trustees, and their terms ended in March 2005. Public trustees for these programs have never served more than one term. However, the White House has now reappointed these former trustees unexpectedly instead of completing discussions with Senate leaders to find appropriate replacements. The Senate Finance Committee is the committee of oversight for these positions.

“These recess appointments are real disappointments on a couple of fronts. The White House has failed to consult in good faith with the Congress on new nominees for these positions. Today, the Administration has chosen to blatantly ride roughshod over the legislative branch’s oversight role. The excuse that Mr. Palmer and Mr. Savings need to be reappointed now so they can sign a 2006 report on the trust funds doesn’t hold water, since their original terms ended a year before that report was due. Moreover, public trustees for Social Security and Medicare have never served more than one term, for the express reason that it is vital to have new blood and fresh thinking for these programs so critical to all Americans. It is an unprecedented step to simply renominate and reappoint former trustees instead of making the effort to find new consensus appointees.”

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