



# Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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## **BAUCUS WORKS TO EXTEND WELFARE BENEFITS CURRENTLY SET TO EXPIRE DECEMBER 31**

*Legislation introduced today provides six-month extension of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families;  
Baucus bill containing comprehensive reform will be priority for 2006*

*Washington, DC* – U.S. Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.), Ranking Member on the Senate Finance Committee, today introduced legislation that would extend authorization for the nation’s welfare programs by six months. Currently, the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program is set to expire on December 31, 2005. TANF is operating now under the latest of 12 extensions Congress has passed since the original welfare law expired in 2002. Earlier this year, Baucus worked with Senate Finance Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and other members of the Finance Committee to write a new and improved welfare bill. The Personal Responsibility Individual Development for Everyone (PRIDE) Act would have helped needy families receive child care, health care and other services to help them transition from welfare to work; however, the PRIDE Act has not been considered by the full Senate. Unless another TANF extension is passed, poor families could begin losing welfare benefits in a few weeks.

**“Congress needs to pass this simple TANF extension before the end of the year to keep the nation’s needy families afloat, and to hold up the Federal government’s end of the bargain as states operate their welfare programs, ”** said Baucus. **“But in 2006, it will be essential to make real progress on welfare reform. Until the PRIDE Act is debated, passed and sent to the President’s desk, our welfare laws will continue to fall short of truly supporting citizens who want to move from welfare to work.”**

The Baucus legislation introduced today would also extend for six months a number of programs related to TANF, most notably Temporary Medicaid Assistance. That program allows families to maintain health care coverage under Medicaid as they transition into the workforce.

For more information on the PRIDE Act, please visit the Finance Committee website at <http://finance.senate.gov/press/Bpress/2005press/prb030905.pdf>.

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