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Contact: Dan Virkstis  
(202) 224-4515

## SENATE FINANCE CHAIRMAN BAUCUS COMMENTS ON PRESIDENT'S FY2009 BUDGET

*Baucus criticizes "lack of candor" about costs,  
says Congress will not slash Medicare for seniors*

*Washington, DC* – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) commented today on President Bush's \$3.1 trillion FY2009 budget, released just this morning. The Senate Finance Committee has jurisdiction over U.S. tax policy, Medicare, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, Social Security, and trade, and also recently approved an economic stimulus package for consideration by the full Senate. Baucus said today that a lack of candor about costs for future tax policy and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as deep and unacceptable cuts to Medicare and Medicaid, are cause for concern.

**"This is a pretty disappointing document, both in terms of its candor about what things really cost, and in terms of its feasibility for future years. The cost of the stimulus package that the country so badly needs is included and used to explain away the deficit, but apparently they used invisible ink on the larger costs of fixing the alternative minimum tax in future years and for funding the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It's also clear from this year's funds for the Children's Health Insurance Program that the White House was low-balling Congress last year on the amount needed to take care of our kids,"** said Baucus. **"This administration ought to know that five years' worth of Medicare and Medicaid cuts totaling \$200 billion are dead on arrival with me and with most of the Congress. They should certainly know that it's useless to trot out their failed proposal to privatize Social Security again. Americans expect us to keep their interests at heart, and to do so with honesty and integrity. The President's budget is a reflection of cloaked policies and irresponsible cuts to vital programs. I expect that Finance Committee members will have many questions for Secretary Paulson and Secretary Leavitt this week about how this document fails to dovetail with reality."**

Chairman Baucus and the Senate Finance Committee will host two hearings this week in response to the President's budget proposal on Tuesday and Wednesday with Secretaries Paulson and Leavitt of the Treasury and of the Department of Health and Human Services, respectively. Both hearings begin at 10:00 a.m. in Dirksen Senate Office Building 215.

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