



For Immediate Release
June 12, 2008

Contact: Carol Guthrie
(202) 224-4515

BAUCUS SAYS SENATE VOTE SHUTS OUT SENIORS

*Vote blocks debate on bill that would make Medicare improvements,
increase physician pay for seniors' care*

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) today condemned a Senate vote blocking debate on the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008, a bill intended to improve the Medicare program for its 44 million senior beneficiaries – particularly low-income seniors and those in rural areas – and to block a 10.6 percent cut in payments to physicians providing those seniors with health care. Baucus introduced the Medicare bill last week as the June 30 payment cut for doctors grew closer, and after months of bipartisan negotiations failed to produce an agreement.

“We all know what this vote was about, and it wasn’t about what’s best for American seniors. The White House doesn’t want overpaid private plans in Medicare to lose a single dime. But Congress can’t operate on ideology. We have to come to some fiscally responsible agreement on how to improve Medicare for low-income and rural beneficiaries, how to keep pharmacies up and running under the drug benefit, and how to keep doctors decently paid for seniors’ care,” said Baucus. **“We owe it to seniors to pass a decent bill that really does something to improve the Medicare program, and we owe it to taxpayers to find smart savings in Medicare that cover the cost.”**

A staff summary of the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act is on the SFC website at <http://finance.senate.gov/sitepages/legislation.htm>. For more information on key aspects of the bill, such as help for rural seniors and the smart savings that can pay for program improvements, see <http://finance.senate.gov/sitepages/medicare2008.htm>.

###