



For Immediate Release
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Contact: Dan Virkstis
202-224-4515

**Floor Statement of Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.)
Regarding Tax Extenders and AMT Amendment**

Mr. President, this amendment addresses tax relief for American families and tax relief for American businesses. This amendment addresses jobs, families, disaster relief, and mental health parity. It addresses what people call the “tax extenders.” And it prevents the Alternative Minimum Tax from hitting millions more American families.

The economy is struggling. And so are America’s working families. Markets are experiencing volatility. At times like these, Americans need tax cuts that they’ve come to count on, that can help them get by.

That’s why this amendment includes a one-year patch for the AMT. This patch would protect more than 21 million Americans from falling victim to the AMT. We will not let more taxpayers fall into the alternative minimum tax.

In addition, the amendment would extend expiring individual and business tax provisions for two years.

These provisions include the qualified tuition deduction to give families relief from high tuition costs. In my home state of Montana alone, almost 14,000 families would get help with high college tuition.

The amendment also includes the teacher expense deduction. This deduction gives back to teachers some of the money that they spend on school supplies to educate America’s children.

The amendment includes a state and local sales tax deduction for those states without an income tax.

The amendment covers several business incentives that help keep American businesses competitive and create jobs.

The amendment includes incentives like the research and development credit. This credit gives an incentive to businesses to invest in research. It helps to create and keep American jobs with good wages. And it helps to keep America competitive in the global economy.

And this package does more than just extend expiring provisions.

It would expand the refundable child tax credit. By expanding this valuable credit, nearly three million more children would be eligible for this tax incentive.

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This amendment would also help to improve health care for countless families dealing with mental illness. This mental health parity legislation would mandate equal assistance for those suffering from mental illness.

This legislation has been championed by our late Colleague Paul Wellstone and our Colleagues Ted Kennedy and Pete Domenici. It has long been a goal here in the Senate. And it is a goal that we can finally meet, today.

The amendment would provide much-needed relief to families and businesses that have been devastated by natural disasters.

The amendment includes a Midwest Disaster Relief package to help those states that experienced extreme flooding earlier this year.

The amendment also contains broader disaster relief to cover future natural disasters. It includes tax benefits to address all federally-declared disaster areas with immediate and reliable tax relief. These provisions would help people who have been hit by hurricanes Ike and Gustav.

This package is partly paid for. We pay for roughly half of the tax extenders. And we do so with sound tax policy.

The amendment would address offshore deferred compensation. This provision would prevent hedge fund managers who keep money overseas from deferring income that they would have to report, if they kept their money in America.

That's not a tax increase on hedge fund managers. Rather, it is a change in the timing of when income tax would be recognized. This is a timing issue, not a tax increase.

This year alone, the Senate has voted 4 times to move to a bill to preserve the important tax relief in this amendment. The Senate voted on June 10, on June 17, on July 29, and on July 30. Each time, we were unable to reach consensus.

This amendment will allow us to come together and finally get the job done. This amendment will let American families and businesses know that Congress cares about them.

Right now, our country is experiencing rough economic times. Congress should do more than just extend legislation. Congress needs to meet the needs of the American people.

And so, let us help to create jobs. Let us help working families to make ends meet. Let us achieve mental health parity, once and for all. And let us provide relief for those who have suffered from natural disasters.

I urge my Colleagues to support the amendment.

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