



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors
Re: Announcement of Health and Human Services secretary nominee
Da: Monday, Dec. 13, 2004

Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, today made the following comment on President Bush's announcement that he will nominate Environmental Protection Agency chief Michael Leavitt to be secretary of Health and Human Services. The Finance Committee has primary jurisdiction over the nomination, responsible for holding a nomination hearing and deciding whether to recommend the nominee to the full Senate.

"If confirmed, Governor Leavitt will take over at a critical time. The agency is preparing to implement the permanent Medicare prescription drug benefit in 2006, faces record Medicaid spending and the challenge of the uninsured, and is undergoing scrutiny from myself and others over the Food and Drug Administration's handling of prescription drug safety. As a former three-term governor, and chairman of the National Governors Association, Governor Leavitt seems well-equipped to understand rising health care costs and their impact on state and federal budgets. I also appreciate his interest in using technology to improve government functions. With their scope and complexity, Medicare and Medicaid can benefit from the latest technology. I look forward to learning more about Governor Leavitt's ideas for running this important agency."