

MEMORANDUM

TO: Reporters and Editors
RE: Health care reform in 111th Congress
DA: Thursday, November 6, 2008

Senator Chuck Grassley, Ranking Member of the Committee on Finance, issued the comment below about the health care reform efforts expected in 2009.

Senator Grassley has been a leading senator on health policy, including his role as one of the chief architects of the 2003 Medicare modernization legislation that created the Medicare prescription drug benefit and his co-sponsorship and advocacy in 2007 for renewing the State Children's Health Insurance Program. He sponsored in 2005 the Medicare Value-Based Purchasing Act and was the lead Senate negotiator in 2005-2006 on the biggest reforms to the Medicaid program since it was created in 1965. Grassley-sponsored amendments to the 1986 update of the federal False Claims Act have become the government's most effective tool against health care fraud. Senator Grassley was an active participant as a member of the Finance Committee in the 1993-1994 health care debate.

Senator Grassley's comment today ---

"The health care system has problems that need fixing. Proposals to improve it affect everybody and the health sector accounts for 16 percent of the economy. So Congress ought to proceed in a way that learns from past mistakes, understands the costs and their repercussions, and doesn't end up torpedoing changes that would make the system more affordable and higher quality for everybody. The broader the support for any health reform initiative, the more durable and effective the changes will be."