



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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Contacts: Laura Hayes, Lara Birkes
202-224-4515

Senator Baucus Comments on the President's State of the Union Address

America is facing a number of challenges and it is only by working together that we can successfully protect our homeland and strengthen the economy. I applaud the leadership President Bush has shown since America was attacked by terrorists more than a year ago and I applaud the leadership that he continued to show tonight.

It is vital that while we remain vigilant in protecting the security of all Americans, we also remain focused on shoring up the economy and creating more good paying job opportunities. I complement the President for continuing to move forward with an economic stimulus proposal and believe that some of the ideas he has put forward are sound. That being said, I am concerned by the size of the President's proposal and by the length of time it will take to have an impact on the economy, especially as we face the potential of an impending war in the Middle East. I believe that one of the best and most immediate ways to stimulate the economy is through direct assistance to the states. I look forward to working together with the President and Congress to pass a responsible and effective stimulus package.

I also look forward to working together to improve Medicare and provide seniors with access to affordable prescription drugs. We must make sure that any improvements to the Medicare program work in rural areas and provide seniors with the flexibility they need. Unfortunately, the President has put forth a plan that has the potential of leaving our rural seniors out in the cold. I will work hard to persuade the Administration to pass a Medicare and prescription drug bill that helps Montanans and Americans throughout the country.