



# Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Chairman

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**Statement by Chairman Max Baucus  
Senate Finance Committee  
RX Drug Plan: Honest Brokers Not Partisan Politics**

For years Congress has been worked to pass a critical prescription drug plan that would provide universal prescription drug coverage for the nearly 20 million elderly and disabled Americans who lack proper coverage.

Consensus can be achieved. But to find it, we must travel this path as honest brokers and not partisan politicians.

Today, our counterparts in the House of Representatives unveiled a set of principles that purport to represent a moderate approach to address the issue of funding for a prescription drug benefit. Sadly, this action does not constitute what we mean when we call for a truly affordable and meaningful drug benefit for America's seniors.

My concern today remains what has always been. A Medicare benefit must be affordable and meaningful to seniors, and I'm not convinced that a \$350 billion benefit provides that. Such a benefit would include cost-sharing requirements that I believe are beyond the reach of what most seniors can afford. I'm also skeptical of the untested systems that would deliver this benefit, particularly the impact such systems may have on rural areas.

We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to add a meaningful and affordable drug benefit to Medicare. This is an issue that should not be driven by politics, but by sound policy. Certain proposals - such as Senator Graham's - are a critical step in the right direction. My hope is others will join this debate so that we can enact a comprehensive, affordable and meaningful benefit this year.

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