



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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For Immediate Release
Wednesday, March 26, 2003

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Baucus Votes in Favor of Senate Budget Resolution; Applauds Moderate Size of Economic Stimulus Package, Expresses Concern Over Medicare Funding

“After weighing the pros and cons, I decided to vote in favor of the budget resolution today for a number of reasons. Most importantly, the bill contains guidelines to hold an economic stimulus package to \$350 billion. I worked closely with Sens. Breaux, Snowe and Voinovich to have this amendment included in the budget resolution, which will provide us with enough funding to assist the economy without furthering burdening the deficit as the original \$726 Billion proposal would have done. \$350 billion is a reasonable level of stimulus, especially given the ever-increasing war costs we’re facing.

I was also pleased with the inclusion of provisions such as increased coverage for uninsured people and additional funds for expired State-Children’s Health Insurance Programs.

One of my top concerns with the bill is the insufficient level of funding that was allocated for Medicare reform and prescription drug coverage. The bill includes \$400 billion for Medicare prescription drugs, reform, and provider payment adjustments, which is a good start. But we must go further. I’m dedicated to searching for additional funding to ensure that both urban and rural seniors have access to a universal, comprehensive prescription drug benefit and that we’re able to enact common sense Medicare reforms. We should never use carrot and stick tactics to force seniors into private plans that don’t work for them.

In the end, the positive aspects of the budget resolution outweighed the negatives. Passage of the bill will allow Congress to move forward with our other important priorities, such as crafting the exact provisions of an economic stimulus package and making Medicare work more effectively for seniors across the country.”