



FOR PLANNING PURPOSES
September 22, 2011

Contact: Communications Office
(202) 224-4515

BAUCUS LAUDS SENATE PASSAGE OF CHILD WELFARE LEGISLATION

Finance Chair's Legislation Will Provide Critical Aid to Vulnerable Children, Families

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) today lauded the Senate's unanimous approval of The Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act, legislation Baucus introduced to provide crucial assistance to at-risk families, youth and foster children by improving and extending key child welfare programs. Chairman Baucus, along with Finance Committee Ranking Member Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources Chairman Geoff Davis (R-Ky.) and Ranking Member Lloyd Doggett (D-Texas), [unveiled the bill earlier this month.](#)

"Passing this bill means children across the country will have an opportunity to grow up in a safe, stable home," Baucus said. **"This legislation will allow states to be innovative with child welfare, building upon traditional foster care with new ideas."**

The bill would extend the Promoting Safe and Stable Families and Child Welfare Services programs and reauthorize the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to allow states to use federal foster care funds to test innovative, new child welfare programs.

The Promoting Safe and Stable Families program provides families who are at risk or in crisis with various support systems, prevents unnecessary foster placements or, when necessary, ensures permanency for children by placing them with family members, reuniting them with parents or finding alternative permanent living arrangements. Similarly, the Child Welfare Services program is designed to keep families together and avoid unnecessarily removing children from their homes.

The child welfare waiver program began in 1994, when Congress gave HHS the authority to approve state-based foster care demonstration projects so they could use federal funding to implement innovative new programs that improved on traditional foster care. However, HHS's authority to approve new child welfare waivers expired in 2006. There are currently waivers in seven states that remain active under short-term extensions, but the legislation announced today will give HHS the authority to award a new round of waiver approvals each year for a period of five years.

###