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**BAUCUS COMMENDS MONTANA'S INNOVATIVE FUNDING
FOR CHILD WELFARE SERVICES AS POSSIBLE MODEL FOR OTHER STATES**

*New report highlights potential of Montana's advisory commission model
for child welfare care reimbursement*

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) today welcomed a new report examining Montana's innovative system for funding child welfare service providers, and said inventive ideas in the Montana system could benefit child welfare programs in other states across the country. The report, a co-production of the Alliance for Children and Families and the United Neighborhood Centers of America, found that a commission created by Montana's state legislature in 2005 can improve care for children in state custody. The commission, called the Rate Advisory Commission, brings together outside experts and child welfare professionals to provide independent ideas and feedback about how to best fund child welfare programs. This feedback, the report found, has given state officials a better understanding of the costs and benefits of providing children's welfare services.

"The Montana model for child welfare reimbursement creates positive results for our kids through open communication between policy-makers, child welfare caregivers and everyday people who use the services," said Baucus. **"Providing lawmakers with more and better information is essential to helping them improve child welfare services and the successful Montana model is one that may benefit children in other states as well."**

Montana's Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) Rate Commission is made up of representatives from service providers, service users or family members of service users, state legislators, and officials from the governor's office. In 2008, the commission submitted its first report to the legislature with recommendations to create a more balanced and equitable reimbursement system.

The Senate Finance Committee has jurisdiction over the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which regulates national child welfare services.

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