



For Immediate Release
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BAUCUS PUSHES BENEFITS EXTENSION FOR OUT-OF-WORK AMERICANS

*Finance Chair Continues Fight for the Unemployed and a Stable Economy;
Says More Work to be Done*

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) continued his fight today to move legislation that would extend unemployment insurance benefits to out-of-work Americans in all 50 states by an additional four weeks until Dec 31, 2009. The Baucus bill would also extend benefits for 13 additional weeks in states with unemployment levels over eight and a half percent.

Senator Baucus has been a leader in fighting for the protection of struggling workers and families during the economic recession. Last year, Baucus was responsible for extending benefits for unemployed workers 13 additional weeks, and championed the unemployment insurance modernization provision as part of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009, giving conditional increased aid to states. The current Baucus proposal would protect over one million Americans from exhausting their unemployment benefits.

“American families and workers want to get back to work, they want to revive this economy and they expect Congress to do its part to help level the playing field so it can happen. Last week we put forward a sensible proposal of additional weeks of benefits so folks can continue to pay their rent and feed their families until the economy comes around,” said Baucus. **“As the economy begins to stabilize, we should be optimistic, though jobless levels were higher than expected again last week so we need to prepare for the long haul. I encourage my colleagues to join us in standing up for unemployed workers and I will continue to tackle this issue as we address the real problems faced each day by millions of American families on hard times.”**

The Baucus bill to extend unemployment insurance benefits would also modify a provision in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to allow families receiving the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or food stamps, to remain eligible while receiving an additional \$25 per week in unemployment insurance benefits. Additionally, the bill would update the Unemployment Insurance Modernization provision in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to allow victims of sexual assault who have left their job to be eligible for benefits under the “compelling family reasons” clause. The Baucus proposal – which is co-sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Reid (D-NV) and Senators Reed (D-RI), Wyden (D-OR), Rockefeller (D-WV), Menendez (D-NJ), Stabenow (D-MI) and Levin (D-MI) – is fully paid for by an extension of the Federal Unemployment Tax through December 31, 2011.

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