

Statement by Senator Chuck Grassley
Ranking Member of the Committee on Finance
regarding the President's statement today on health care reform
Wednesday, March 3, 2010

“The American health care system is in need of reform. We spend too much on health care, and we don't get enough value for the dollars we spend. We should undertake reforms that can lower cost and improve quality without jeopardizing our economy by raising taxes or making coverage even more unaffordable with higher premiums.

“The President continues to try to accomplish his agenda by passing a massive health care reform bill. Beyond the fact that the bills continue to be written behind closed doors and include a limited number of Republican ideas, the legislation is so badly flawed that it will take more than token updates to fix them. The bills we've seen so far, including what's being talked about today, increase premiums, make hundreds of billions in unsustainable cuts to Medicare, and create a permanent new entitlement at a time when we most need to focus on getting our economy back on track. The bills use budget gimmicks, including raiding Social Security and double counting in an attempt to claim they reduce the deficit. Nothing the President said today changes those fundamental facts, and some of what he's now proposing makes these problems even worse. Instead, Congress should focus on the areas where there's broad agreement. Claims that this means delay misses the point that the American people are opposed to a flawed bill being jammed through and making things worse, not better.

“Democratic leaders have the option of using budget reconciliation to pass their bills. I hope they'll choose not to use a purely partisan process to pass a bill that would re-organize one-sixth of America's economy and which doesn't have the support of a majority of Americans. That would be a mistake.”