



For Immediate Release
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BAUCUS WINS PASSAGE OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE, MEDICAID SAFEGUARDS IN 2008 SENATE SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING BILL

Key bipartisan provisions for America approved by full Senate

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) today won Senate passage of key Finance provisions in the domestic spending portion of the 2008 supplemental funding bill, including measures that would extend unemployment insurance (UI) for America’s workers and that would safeguard Medicaid services for millions of low-income Americans. The Senate Finance Committee introduced similar UI provisions in late January as part of the economic stimulus package, and Baucus has been vocal in his opposition to strict Medicaid regulations issued by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to reduce federal funding to the Medicaid program. Today, the Senate voted 75-22 to approve the provisions as part of a domestic spending amendment to the overall funding bill, which now goes back to the House of Representatives for further consideration.

“This is about America’s working families, and supporting struggling folks who need jobs and decent health care,” said Baucus. **“Nearly three million workers have exhausted their unemployment benefits in the last year, and this legislation will help to keep more families financially afloat as well as ensure that millions of Medicaid recipients continue to get the medical treatment they need. I urge the entire Congress to put these provisions on the President’s desk for signature into law.”**

The UI provision would make 13 weeks of additional UI benefits available to jobless Americans through the end of March 2009. Americans in high unemployment states – with total unemployment rates of six percent or higher – would have 13 additional weeks of eligibility for a total of 26 additional weeks. Individuals who have begun to receive either 13-week extension of benefits by the end of March would be eligible to receive benefits for the remainder of that 13 weeks.

One provision related to Medicaid would suspend until April 1, 2009, seven regulations issued by HHS to reduce federal funding to the Medicaid program by nearly \$20 billion, cutting millions of vulnerable Americans out of the health care system. Specifically, the proposed rules would force cuts in school-based, rehabilitation, and case management services, and limit the ability of states to impose taxes on health care providers. They would also change the definition of public provider, the definition of outpatient services, the policy on intergovernmental transfers, and eliminate payment for graduate medical education. These rules would shift millions of dollars in health care costs to state and local governments at a time when they are already under tremendous

financial pressure. The National Governors' Association has asked Congress to block these proposed regulations.

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