



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

NEWS RELEASE

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Baucus Introduces the Encouraging Work Act of 2005 *Senator Working to Increase Job Opportunities Across the Country*

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) U.S. Senators Max Baucus (D-Mont.) and Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) joined together to introduce bipartisan legislation permanently extending and improving the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and the Welfare-to-Work (W-t-W) tax credit.

Since 1996, these two tax credits have played an integral role in assisting over 2.2 million individuals dependent on public assistance enter the workforce. These hiring tax incentives help level the job selection playing field by providing employers with additional resources to help recruit, select, train and retain people facing significant barriers to find stable employment.

"The statistics about the number of people who have been able to join the workforce because of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and Welfare-to-Work tax credit speak volumes about the success of these programs," Baucus said. "Passing the Encouraging Work Act of 2005 will be crucial if we're to continue this success. Passing this legislation will move people off the welfare roles and into the workforce. I'm pleased to be working together with Senator Santorum to help provide more job opportunities for people across the country."

"I am pleased to work with Senator Baucus on this effort to continue to create promising opportunities for all Americans," said Senator Santorum. "The Encouraging Work Act of 2005 is an important step in helping Americans shift from public assistance programs to lives of self-sufficiency. I urge my colleagues in the Senate to support this meaningful legislation."

The Encouraging Work Act of 2005 will:

- make the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and Welfare to Work tax credit permanent, encouraging more employers to participate;
- combine the two credit programs, which will reduce administrative burden and complexity; and
- improve the effectiveness of the program by, for example, extending opportunities to at-risk men and fathers of children on welfare.

Baucus today also highlighted the success that his state of Montana has seen due to the WOTC and W-t-W programs.

"In my home state of Montana, both large multinational firms and smaller family-owned businesses have gained new employees through these programs and more than 1,000 Montanans were eligible to take advantage of the WOTC program," Baucus said. "Recipients of food stamps, TANF relief, and U.S. veterans in my state and all over the nation have been able to leave welfare roles because of new opportunities created by the WOTC and W-t-W programs. I look forward to passing this bill and permanently extending these credits."

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