



For Immediate Release
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SENATE PASSES MEDICARE BILL FOR SENIORS, MILITARY FAMILIES BY VETO-PROOF MAJORITY

*Bill based on Finance Chairman Baucus's Medicare legislation wins 69-30,
moves to White House*

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) today hailed Senate passage of the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act. The legislation, which was agreed to in the Senate by a veto-proof majority of 69 to 30, was the House-passed version of the Medicare bill that Baucus introduced in the Senate in June. Senator Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) provided the key 60th vote needed for the bill to proceed to passage today. The legislation will reverse a 10.6 percent cut in reimbursement to seniors' doctors that took effect on July 1 and is threatening access to health care for seniors and for military families that depend on the TRICARE system, which uses the same payment rules as Medicare. The bill passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 355-59 on June 24. It now goes to the White House, where it can be signed into law immediately to help seniors and military families get the health care they need. From Chairman Baucus:

“The American people – our seniors, our military families, all of us – have a hero today. Ted Kennedy has always been their champion. Today, he stood as a champion to help lead the Senate to do the right thing, and save Medicare from a true crisis. Today, the Senate did the right thing. We voted to reverse the physician payment cut that threatened seniors' access to care, and health care for military families. We approved \$4 billion to help rural and low income seniors. We voted for a host of improvements that will make Medicare work better for every beneficiary.

“This vote is a victory not for one party, but for a whole country. The Senate did the right thing on Medicare. Now, I speak for the 44 million seniors in Medicare and for the nine million military families in TRICARE. I urge the President to sign this bill, to do what's right on Medicare now.”

Key elements of the Medicare bill are described on the Finance Committee website at <http://finance.senate.gov/sitepages/medicare2008.htm>.

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