



http://finance.senate.gov
Press_Office@finance-rep.senate.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors
Re: GAO report on trade adjustment assistance
Da: Thursday, May 31, 2007

Today the Government Accountability Office is issuing a report requested by Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus and Ranking Republican Chuck Grassley on the operation of trade adjustment assistance programs for dislocated workers. The report recommends changes to the funding allocation and eligibility requirements for these programs. The report, “Trade Adjustment Assistance, Changes to Funding Allocation and Eligibility Requirements Could Enhance States’ Ability to Provide Benefits and Services,” will be available online today at www.gao.gov. Grassley made the following comment on the report.

“This report raises a lot of issues we need to consider as we begin the process of re-authorizing our trade adjustment assistance programs. If we can simplify program deadlines and eligibility requirements to better meet the needs of trade-affected workers, we should. The Finance Committee will have an opportunity to explore such ideas during its hearing on trade adjustment assistance programs next week.

“I was glad to learn that the Labor Department is re-evaluating its funding allocation procedures. States like Iowa need reliable funding streams for these programs to work. This Administration has made effective efforts to reduce states’ uncertainty, but as the Labor Department itself recognizes, there’s still room for improvement.

“I question GAO’s suggestion that states be allowed to use training funds for case management services. We need to spend taxpayer dollars wisely. If case management services are already available to dislocated workers under the Workforce Investment Act, why should we take money away from worker training to fund redundant services for trade-affected workers? We need to ensure that any reforms included in the re-authorization are fiscally responsible.”