

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 9, 2012

The Honorable Max Baucus  
511 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510-2602

Dear Senator Baucus,

As the Conference Committee begins discussions concerning a legislative package to address unemployment benefits, the payroll tax holiday, and physician reimbursement under Medicare, I urge you to take this opportunity to craft a bipartisan compromise that will provide the long-term solutions our country needs.

While job creation must be our continuing goal and focus, we must recognize that progress on this front is slow. Times are tough for Americans. My state has the unfortunate distinction of having led the nation in unemployment for more than two years. Unemployment in Nevada persists at the unacceptable rate of 13 percent. For this reason, I urge you to fully extend current federal unemployment programs for at least one year in states like Nevada that suffer from high unemployment. As you may know, I have introduced legislation, the Responsible Unemployment Extension Act (S.1885), fully-paid for legislation that would extend this vital safety net for one year. Unemployed Americans and their families should not have to worry about their immediate future being jeopardized by gridlock and political posturing in Washington.

Furthermore, I would also encourage you to include a yearlong extension of the temporary payroll tax holiday in your compromise legislation. The payroll tax holiday has helped lower taxes for millions of Americans and has put more in the pockets of the average working family. I respectfully request that the Conference Committee strongly consider my legislation, S. 1931, which would extend the payroll tax holiday while also protecting Social Security. This Committee has an opportunity to extend the temporary payroll tax holiday in order to help economic growth, and I hope my legislation can help provide a path forward.

Finally, I urge you to include a long-term update to the Medicare reimbursement schedule in your bill. Unstable reimbursement in Medicare threatens seniors' access to medical care throughout our nation. The flawed Medicare physician payment system is one of the most pressing issues our healthcare system faces today, yet has been largely ignored by Congress except for short-term extensions that ignore the root of the problem.

American businesses and families are desperate for policies that will create certainty and stability. In focusing on areas of agreement on how to create jobs, such as the Keystone XL pipeline, I believe that we can move our economy forward without raising taxes on job creators. I applaud the Committee's commitment to finding a way forward to extend these vitally important expiring provisions and encourage you to move beyond a discussion of temporary assistance to one of long-term economic growth, fundamental tax reform, and preserving safety net programs for future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dean Heller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "H".

DEAN HELLER  
U.S. Senator