

# **SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE**

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## **KENT CONRAD, CHAIRMAN**

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### **STATEMENT BY SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN KENT CONRAD (D-ND) ON CBO ESTIMATE OF SENATE HEALTH REFORM PLAN**

“The Congressional Budget Office has confirmed that the Senate bill goes a long way in delivering access to quality, affordable health care to all Americans in a fiscally responsible way. The bill cuts the budget deficit by \$130 billion over the first 10 years and by as much as \$650 billion in the next decade. It is fully paid for and will not add one dime to our nation’s debt.

“The Senate bill puts an end to insurance industry abuses that deny individuals coverage for pre-existing conditions and drop coverage if you get sick. It makes Medicare more sustainable and protects seniors’ benefits. And it expands health coverage to 31 million Americans who do not have coverage now.

“It also includes my plan for creating private, non-profit health care cooperatives that would provide an additional choice to help families, individuals and small businesses afford quality care. The Senate bill does include a so-called public option, but it does not disadvantage North Dakota by tying reimbursement to Medicare rates.

“To be clear, the Senate bill sets the goal of not allowing federal funding for abortion. It does not provide health care to illegal immigrants. It does not mandate end of life counseling. And it is expected to extend the solvency of Medicare by at least four years.

“It is clear that America’s health care system is in need of serious reform. We need to improve quality and contain costs. While not perfect, the Senate bill is a step in the right direction. I look forward to a full and open debate in the coming days and will continue to work to improve this legislation in an effort to rein in cost growth, expand coverage, and improve quality for all North Dakotans.”

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