



UNITED STATES SENATOR  
**SUSAN M. COLLINS**

PRESS RELEASE



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**SENATOR COLLINS RELEASES STATEMENT ON  
SENATE HEALTH CARE REFORM DEBATE**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – As the U.S. Senate moves forward in the health care reform debate, Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) today released this statement:

“There simply is no question that our nation’s health care system requires substantial reform. The status quo of soaring health care costs, families struggling, millions uninsured, and health care provider shortages is unacceptable. Maine families and small businesses are paying ever higher premiums, increased deductibles and greater co-pays.

“Due, in large measure, to the efforts of Senator Olympia Snowe, who has worked tirelessly, the legislation passed by the Senate Finance Committee represents a substantial improvement over the costly and flawed alternative approved by the Senate Health Committee as well as the House bills.

“Nevertheless, the Senate Finance Committee’s bill falls short of the goal of providing access to more affordable health care for all Americans. The goal of health care reform must be to rein in costs and provide consumers with more affordable choices. Yet, many individuals and families would be forced to pay more for their health care under the Finance Committee bill, and they would have fewer choices. Our health care reform efforts should give Americans more, not fewer, choices of affordable coverage options.

“This bill also could lead to onerous financial penalties for small businesses that are already struggling to provide affordable health insurance to their employees. As structured, the bill actually could discourage small businesses from adding more jobs.

“I am troubled that the legislation would cut nearly \$500 billion from Medicare, which provides care for our oldest Americans and our most vulnerable citizens. These cuts would adversely affect the ability of Maine’s hospitals and other health care providers to provide essential services to Medicare patients. Medicare, which is so critically important to our nation’s seniors, is already in financial trouble. It should not be the piggy bank for new spending programs when revenues are needed to shore up the current program.

“Finally, I am disappointed that the Finance Committee did not focus more on cost containment, which should have been one of the most important goals of this bill. For example, the legislation contains no meaningful medical liability reforms to reduce frivolous lawsuits and reduce the costly practice of defensive medicine. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that medical liability reform could save \$54 billion in health care costs over the next decade. And the bill should do more to reform the health care delivery system in ways that would curb costs and improve the quality of care.

“I share the goal of passing responsible health care reform and, working with members on both sides of the aisle who share these concerns, I am hopeful that many improvements will continue to be made to produce a

bill that can achieve bipartisan support. Our goal should be legislation that protects affordable health care choices, safeguards Medicare, and reduces costs to the consumer and the taxpayer especially at a time when we simply cannot afford to pay more.”

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