



Grassley & Baucus propose a jobs bill – which Majority Leader Reid quickly rejects

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Washington, Feb. 11 – Hopes raised by Thursday morning’s release of a draft Baucus/Grassley bipartisan jobs bill disappeared within hours when Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) rejected the draft as conceding too much to Republican demands for broad tax cuts and other goodies. Instead, Reid’s apparent strategy is to craft several packages of smaller, more-targeted legislation. Reid’s objective seems to be to either claim victory by passing a string of targeted bills – or otherwise be able to pin a string of legislative defeats on a “pattern of Republican obstructionism.”

A spokesman for Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) commented that “Senator Reid’s announcement sends a message that he wants to go partisan and blame Republicans when Senator Grassley and others were trying to find common ground on solutions to help get the economy back on track and people back to work. Senator Reid did this just as Republican senators were saying they liked things in the Baucus-Grassley draft, which would have prevented billions of dollars in tax increases and offset any spending. The Majority Leader pulled the rug out from work to build broad-based support for tax relief and other efforts to help the private sector recover from the economic crisis.”

In explaining his rejection of the compromise painstakingly worked out over weeks by Senate Finance Committee Chair Max Baucus (D-MT) and the committee’s Ranking Member Chuck Grassley (R-IA), Reid told reporters Thursday afternoon that “The message is so watered down with people wanting other things in this big package that we’re going to have to come back and finish that.” To begin with, Reid explained that instead of a comprehensive bill, when the Senate resumes business after it returns from its Presidents’ Day recess on Feb. 23rd, it will take up a smaller bill focused on small business tax breaks, a one-year extension of the highway act to generate construction jobs, and a bipartisan tax-credit package crafted by Sens. Orin Hatch (R-UT) and Chuck Schumer (D-NY).

Reid said that separate legislation later will tackle extending various tax provisions, such as the expired biodiesel tax credit, “and all the other stuff.”

Reid made it clear he expects that Republicans will find it politically very difficult to oppose his smaller, more focused jobs bill – which means that either the Democrats will win an important legislative victory or that Republicans will lose some of the popular support they’ve gained recently.

For details of Sen. Reid’s jobs bill, go to: www.agri-pulse.com/uploaded/Feb1110H3.pdf.

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