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U.S. SENATOR NORTH CAROLINA

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This week, the Senate has been voting on an appropriations bill to fund the Department of Interior. Although this was the main bill on the floor, most eyes have been on the Senate Finance Committee as they continue to work on a health care reform proposal introduced by Senator Baucus (D-MT) last week.

An amendment introduced by Senator Bunning (R-KY) that required the health care reform bill and estimates of its costs to be available to the public 72 hours before the final vote in the Finance Committee was rejected by a vote of 11-12. This amendment would have given Senators and the American people the opportunity to analyze and understand what is being voted on by the Committee. Chairman Max Baucus (D-MT) introduced a modified version of the amendment, which passed on a party-line vote, that requires that only "conceptual" language (essentially a summary) and cost analysis be available at some point before the Finance Committee votes.

I got the chance this week to speak about health care reform with Jon Scott and Jane Skinner on Fox News' Happening Now. As I've noted before, I agree that reform is needed, but the proposal put forth and now being debated in the Senate Finance Committee fails several crucial tests. The bill cuts Medicare by almost half a trillion dollars, increases spending and raises taxes.

To watch the interview, click [here](#).

On Wednesday, I met with the Director of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to discuss CDC's role in the scientific studies taking place at Camp Lejeune to determine the extent and impact of water contamination on the base. This came on the heels of a meeting I had last week with the Commandant of the Marine Corps and the Secretary of the Navy to discuss the same issue. Earlier this summer, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) issued a report that determined that the water systems at Camp Lejeune were in some cases highly contaminated by two hazardous chemicals, but the report also stated that it could not determine for sure whether the people exposed to these chemicals may have suffered adverse health outcomes as a result. I am deeply concerned by this report as I feel that it creates more questions than answers.

Former Marines, their families, and former employees at Camp Lejeune have waited far too long for answers, and we need to start working toward a resolution. That is why Senator Kay Hagan and I introduced the [Caring for Camp Lejeune Veterans Act of 2009](#). This bill would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide health care to veterans and their family members who have experienced adverse health effects as a result of exposure to well water contaminated by human carcinogens at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. Currently, the Agency for Toxic Substances and

Disease Registry (ATSDR), a division of CDC, is conducting scientific studies to further understand the extent of human exposure on Camp Lejeune. Once these studies are concluded, we will have a better idea of who was affected and how we can best help them. Stay tuned for updates on this process.

Also this week, the President criticized student lenders for being opposed to legislation that would overhaul federal student loan program. As I have mentioned before, I am against the Administration's proposal to make the federal government the sole source of student loans because of the negative impact it would have on those trying to pursue higher education. Those affected most by the government taking over the student loan program would be the American students and their families. The Administration's proposal would have a devastating effect on the non-profit College Foundation in North Carolina, which is the largest provider of student loans in our state.

Located in our State and not run by government bureaucrats in Washington, the College Foundation is best able to respond to the individual needs of North Carolina students and their parents. Last year, there were 354,482 college applications submitted by North Carolinians through CFNC.org ([CFNC Services](#)).

For timely updates from Washington, please visit my [blog](#).

Sincerely,

U.S. Senator Richard Burr

*Please do not respond to this email address. To contact me please click [here](#), or visit my website [burr.senate.gov](#).

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