



Department of Social Development and World Peace

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • FAX 202-541-3339
WEBSITE: WWW.USCCB.ORG/SDWP

March 17, 2005

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I urge you to support the amendment to the fiscal year 2006 Budget Resolution to be offered by Senators Gordon Smith and Jeff Bingaman. The Smith-Bingaman amendment would strike the reconciliation instructions to the Senate Finance Committee to cut programs in its jurisdiction by \$15 billion. If not removed from the Budget Resolution, these instructions will result in substantial cuts to the Medicaid program, which could have disastrous consequences for the millions of low-income pregnant, women, children, elderly and people with disabilities who rely on Medicaid for their health care, as well as the health care providers who serve them.

We are pleased that the Smith-Bingaman amendment would instead provide funding for the creation of a bipartisan commission to examine the Medicaid program to ensure its efficiency and effectiveness. Such a comprehensive review is appropriate before any dramatic changes are made to the program, and will help to make sure Medicaid remains strong and vibrant into the future.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio, Ph.D., D.D.
Bishop of Brooklyn
Chairman, Domestic Policy Committee