



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

# Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

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Prepared Opening Remarks of Sen. Chuck Grassley  
Chairman, Committee on Finance  
at the House-Senate Pension Bill Conference Initial Meeting  
Wednesday, March 8, 2006

I want to start off by thanking Chairman Enzi for calling this meeting this evening, and showing great leadership and commitment to getting this conference going. As we all know, it's taken too long for us to get here. But now that we're here, I look forward to rolling up our sleeves together, and getting this important bill signed into law before April 15. I want to start off by thanking my partner in this legislation at the Finance Committee, Senator Baucus. I look forward to continuing to work together. I also want to thank Chairman Enzi and Senator Kennedy, who were partners with me and Senator Baucus, in moving the bill through the Senate on a bipartisan basis.

And I'm looking forward to building a partnership with our colleagues in the House in finalizing this legislation. Both the House and Senate have done a lot of good work. And I believe we have an opportunity here in conference to improve the legislation even further. With the baby boom generation on the cusp of retirement and headlines of major corporate pension defaults, the American people are more focused than ever on retirement security. They know that there are problems, and they expect us as their elected officials to solve those problems.

Unfortunately, the public's confidence in our ability to work together to solve their problems has been dented (and that lack of confidence applies to all of us – Republican and Democrat). Most importantly, they want us to act in the public interest – not do the bidding of special interests. We have shown that we can work together on this legislation. I'm confident that we'll continue that track record here in conference. We agree on too much, and this legislation is too important, to do otherwise. Bipartisanship has been the key to our success so far, and it will be the key to getting a good conference agreement that can be signed into law by our April 15 deadline. Thank you again to Chairman Enzi, and I look forward to working with all of you.