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### HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

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Senior citizens, the majority of whom are on limited and fixed income, depend on essential health care services provided by the Medicare and Medicaid programs. Senator Akaka has worked hard to strengthen these programs to ensure access and affordability to needed medical care. That is why he has called for repeal of the requirement for residents applying or reapplying for Medicaid to produce a passport or birth certificate to prove they are U.S. citizens. An estimated 51 million people will be affected by these unworkable documentation requirements when they apply or reapply for Medicaid.

He lobbied and voted for legislation to establish a comprehensive Medicare prescription drug benefit. When the 2003 Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act falsely promised seniors it would make prescription drugs more affordable, he voted against it. Under the measure, prescription drug benefits will not provide sufficient drug coverage and many seniors will be worse off under the law.

In addition, the Senator is committed to making substantial improvements in Medicare prescription drug benefits to make essential medication affordable to seniors. To that end, he worked to protect \$21.6 billion intended for Medicaid and the Earned Income Tax Credit benefits from being diverted for additional tax cuts in the FY 2005 Budget Resolution.

### SOCIAL SECURITY

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Senator Akaka is also a strong supporter of the Social Security program. Social Security has been our nation's most successful and effective retirement and anti-poverty program. It has provided a degree of retirement security for seniors with an inflation protected income source. As a family insurance program, Social Security has protected individuals with disabilities, surviving spouses and children against unpredictable events and financial hardships. For a majority of those 65 or older, more than half of their income is derived from Social Security benefits and one-third of Social Security beneficiaries receive survivors benefits or disability insurance. Women and children, especially, have been shielded from severe financial impacts because of Social Security more than any other government program.

Senator Akaka is opposed to radical proposals to undermine fundamental principles central to the Social Security program. Privatization undermines the social insurance proposition of the Social Security program and changes it into an investment program. Under privatization, the guaranteed defined benefit social insurance safety net becomes a defined contribution retirement gamble, and he opposes privatizing the Social Security program. Senator Akaka believes that Social Security can be strengthened without cutting benefits by alternatives that encourage higher rates of savings with benefits targeted to working and middle class families who need the help the most.