March 14, 2012

U.S. Senate Homeland Security & Government Affairs Committee "Raising the Bar for Congress: Reform Proposals for the 21st Century" Statement by Senator Johnny Isakson

Today's hearing represents an important step toward improving the reliability, efficiency and transparency with which Congress produces the federal budget. I commend Chairman Lieberman and Ranking Member Collins on holding this hearing and am grateful for their continued focus on fixing our broken budget process. I am further grateful to the witnesses who join the Committee today to share their unique federal budgetary insights and expertise.

Solving our long-term deficit problems will require tough choices in every area of the federal budget, but we will never be able to make those choices unless we change the way we do business in Washington, D.C. That is why I, along with Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), have joined together in proposing fundamental, commonsense reform to bring needed oversight and scrutiny to the federal budget process.

Our legislation would convert the federal budget process into a two-year, more thoughtful process, and would require Congress to conduct much-needed oversight. The *Biennial Budgeting and Appropriations Act* dedicates the first year of a Congress to appropriating federal dollars and devotes the second year to scrutinizing federal programs to determine if they are working and deserve continued funding.

As Members of Congress, we are entrusted with the responsibility of spending taxpayer dollars wisely. Our current budget and spending process makes it all too easy for waste and inefficiency to continue year after year or, even worse, to remain hidden. Switching to a biennial budgeting process would be a big step toward fiscal responsibility at a time when all of us agree we must focus more attention on the nation's bottom line.

Senator Johnny Isakson