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## **N.G.A. APPLAUDS SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE APPROVAL OF TAX CUT PACKAGE, INCLUDING REPEAL OF THE ESTATE TAX**

**WASHINGTON, DC (May 16, 2001)** – Last night, the Senate Finance Committee approved (13-5) a \$1.35 trillion, 11-year tax-cut package, including repeal of the estate tax. Four Democrats voted for the mark, crafted by Finance Committee Chairman, Charles Grassley (R-IA) and ranking Democrat Max Baucus (D-MT). In addition to Baucus, the Democrats supporting the package were Senators John Breaux (LA), Robert Torricelli (NJ), and Blanche Lincoln (AK).

The National Grocers Association (N.G.A.) supports the full repeal of the estate tax. Last week, Thomas K. Zaucha, president and CEO of N.G.A., wrote to senate leaders on behalf of family-owned retail, wholesale and manufacturing grocery companies nationwide, urging them to support full repeal of the estate tax, stating, “It is simply time to end, not amend, the death tax.” N.G.A. members have been fighting for full repeal of this onerous death tax for years. Competition is tough enough against the corporate giants, but what makes the tax system so unfair is that instead of being able to invest to grow the business, their resources are directed to re-capitalizing the business just to be able to pay the “death tax”. Estate tax repeal will help maintain a diversified food system which significantly benefits the American consumer.

“This is one more step in the process of Senate passage and we are continuing our grass-roots efforts to achieve that end,” said Zaucha. “President Bush’s administration and the Senate leadership have been consistent and strong advocates for passage of this tax relief package, which includes the estate tax repeal.”

The House is expected to act today and the full Senate is expected to act tomorrow. Republican leaders would like to have a tax reconciliation bill on the president’s desk by the Memorial Day recess. N.G.A. looks forward to passage by the Senate and ultimate signage into law by the President.

N.G.A. is the national trade association representing the retail and wholesale grocers that comprise the independent sector of the food distribution industry. An independent retailer is a privately owned or controlled food retail company operating in a variety of formats. Some are publicly traded but with controlling shares held by the family. Most independent operators are serviced by wholesale distributors, while others may be partially or fully self-distributing. Independents are the true “entrepreneurs” of the grocery industry and dedicated to their customers, associates, and communities. N.G.A. members include retail and wholesale grocers and their state associations, as well as manufacturers and service suppliers.