

Treasury secretary says 'keep it simple'

by UPI

WASHINGTON - U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson said Sunday the Senate should "keep the deal simple" when it comes to the economic stimulus package. President George Bush and the House have agreed on a \$150 billion package of tax rebates and other tax cuts aimed at juicing up the sluggish U.S. economy. However, some Senate Democrats and Republicans have indicated they want some different approaches, including extended unemployment benefits, boosting the food stamps and home heating assistance programs, giving states more money for Medicaid and expanded spending on the nation's infrastructure. But Paulson said in an appearance on "Fox News Sunday" he doesn't think the Senate will risk derailing the bipartisan deal. He added that he doesn't think Americans "have much patience for anything that slows down this process of getting money into our economy." "The key here is keeping the deal simple," Paulson said. "Complexity is our enemy right here. Once you start adding things, it's a slippery slope and the process could quickly bog down, and it'd screech to a stop here." Asked if Bush would risk vetoing a package he finds too unappealing, Paulson said he didn't want to "cast a shadow on this rare bipartisan moment" and he's "optimistic" Senate leaders will see it the same way. The secretary also called the package amount "an optimum size," indicating a reluctance to see it pushed higher.

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