

## **Grassley fights**

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Sen. Charles Grassley is an important voice in Washington on many issues of major significance to the future of the nation. While that may be the most significant aspect of his service, he also is a tireless opponent of wasteful government expenditures.

The Iowa Republican has never forgotten his roots on an Iowa farm. He understands that much of the money federal agencies spend is an aggregation of the tax dollars paid by average Americans of modest means. Grassley understands that people work hard to earn that money and have a right to expect that it will be spent with wisdom and frugality.

A good example of Grassley's determination to root out waste is his recent demand that U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius explain troubling expenditure increases at DHHS. He took note of a 6 percent jump in fiscal year 2008 in the number of federal employees traveling internationally and a 14 percent increase in what such travel cost. According to Grassley, 95 percent of the travel that concerns him was by personnel who come under the jurisdiction of DHHS.

There is preliminary evidence in a report Grassley received that during fiscal year 2008 officials at DHHS may not have been sufficiently frugal in overseeing these travel expenditures. He wants to have that evaluated and make certain any shortcomings in compliance with government requirements are addressed.

"According to the report," Grassley wrote in a letter to Sebelius asking her to look into the matter, "the increased costs were not caused by travel to more distant locations but by travel at the higher business-class fare, and that raises questions about whether department policies are being followed to make sure official travel isn't any more expensive than it needs to be."

During a time of economic downturn, it would be especially unfortunate if federal employees were not doing their part to keep the federal deficit from growing. That Grassley is being aggressive in holding them accountable is very good news for taxpayers in Iowa and all across the nation.