



For Immediate Release

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ENZI APPLAUDS SENATE PASSAGE OF THE COMBATING AUTISM ACT

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today praised the Senate's quick passage of the "Combating Autism Act," S. 843, a bill he said is "an important step toward improving the lives of persons with autism and families affected by autism."

With up to 1 in 166 children being diagnosed with autism in the United States, it is vital that we improve our understanding of the causes, symptoms, interventions, and supports and services available for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)," Enzi said. "We must also ensure that there are effective programs in place to meet the diverse needs of persons with autism and their families, and that these programs work in close coordination with one another."

S. 843 will expand research and coordination at National Institutes of Health (NIH) with regard to the possible causes and potential treatments of autism, increase autism awareness through Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and integrate health, education, and disability programs for persons diagnosed with ASD.

"I want to thank the original cosponsors of the bill, Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA) and Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT), for introducing this legislation and for working with me to fine-tune it," Enzi said. "I would also like to express my deep appreciation and thanks to the Committee Ranking Member, Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA), for his hard work during this process. I encourage the House of Representatives to take up this matter as quickly as possible when they return, so that we can send this bill to the President for his signature."

"I also want to thank the various groups and individuals who work on behalf of individuals and families affected by ASD and other developmental disabilities," Enzi added. "I appreciate the way in which this community of advocates came together to work with me and my colleagues as we worked to put this bill together."

Key provisions of the bill include:

- Developing and implementing a strategic plan for research related to autism spectrum disorders;
- Reauthorizing Autism Centers of Excellence and providing funds to the centers for coordination of services and information for patients;
- Supporting basic and clinical research into the fields of developmental neurobiology, genetics, epigenetics, pharmacology, nutrition, immunology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, psychopharmacology, and toxicology;
- Improving coordination of the various federal, State, and local supports and services available to persons with autism and families affected by autism;
- Increasing the number of providers that can screen, diagnosis and provide interventions to persons with autism;
- Promoting research to determine evidence-based best practices for diagnosis, early detection, prevention, intervention and possible/potential cure for autism spectrum disorders; and,
- Providing funding for the collection, storage, coordination, and public availability of data generated from public and private research partnerships.

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