



For Immediate Release

Contact: Craig Orfield
(202) 224-6770

Friday, December 8, 2006

***ENZI APPLAUDS SENATE APPROVAL OF BILL TO REFORM,
STRENGTHEN NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH***

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today said that the "National Institutes of Health Reform Act" (H.R. 6164), which the Senate approved today, will "enhance research into new medical treatments and cures by the nation's premier medical research institute by fostering collaboration amongst multiple institutes on complicated projects, and at the same time, ensure that federal dollars are spent more wisely and more effectively."

"The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Reform Act will provide for periodic reviews of the NIH structure and allow for careful reorganization of the agency to help it better achieve its mission – finding treatments and cures to improve and save peoples' lives," Enzi said. "As NIH has grown, the funding structure established by Congress has grown inefficient and, in some cases, proven an impediment to carrying out the agency's mission."

By passing H.R. 6164, the Senate has taken an important step to create a Common Fund that will finance projects that do not fit into a single Institute or Center within NIH, which will help foster the continued progress of the agency as a whole.

"In the last several years, we have greatly increased the budget of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to approximately \$28 billion without making corresponding structural changes to the agency," Enzi said. "As a result, the institutes of the NIH have frequently duplicated each other's research without even realizing it. This bill will allow the institutes to collaborate on projects and research, rather than repeat them."

"Passage of this bill is a culmination of a lot of work. I want to commend Congressman Joe Barton (R-TX), Chairman of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, and Congressman John Dingell (D-MI), the Committee's Ranking Member, for their hard work on crafting this legislation and their tireless work which has enabled the Senate to pass this important piece of legislation tonight." Enzi said.

Key components of the bill include:

- Creating a Common Fund to support research programs that involve multiple institutes and make sure that the structure of NIH is not an impediment to collaboration across institutes;
- Allowing carefully controlled reorganization of NIH so that the structure of NIH matches its mission; and,
- Improving reporting requirements so that Americans can know what the agency is doing and how it is using funds, and make to the agency more responsive to public concerns about specific diseases.

####