



For Immediate Release

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ENZI CONTINUES PUSH FOR LEGISLATION TO EXPAND HEALTH CARE ACCESS FOR WORKING FAMILIES, RESTRAIN COSTS

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today commended the Committee' new Chairman, Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA) for convening a Roundtable hearing on health care reform, and said that he is committed to working in a bipartisan manner to find solutions to the nation's health care crisis and expanding access to health care for working families and small businesses.

"I want to thank Senator Kennedy for assembling today's Roundtable to discuss the challenges and opportunities for health care in America," Enzi said. "This hearing serves as an excellent chance to examine broad health care issues at the 30,000 foot level, and to exchange concrete ideas to provide relief to America's growing population of working families who cannot afford health insurance."

"I look forward to working closely with Senator Kennedy and others to find bipartisan agreements on legislation to reduce health care costs, improve health care quality, and expand access to care," Enzi said.

"We did a great job in the last Congress to build the foundation for meaningful health care reform in several areas – reforms that can be implemented right away at little or no cost – for people across the country that are suffering under the skyrocketing costs of health care," Enzi said. "I am firmly committed to reaching across the aisle to hammer out agreements on Small Business Health Plan and health information technology legislation that are fiscally responsible, politically feasible, and will make a real difference in the lives of working Americans."

One area Enzi believes may be solid ground for compromise is a combination of market-based small business pooling with targeted tax-based help for low-wage and small businesses and their employees. "I am prepared to seriously explore such an approach, provided it is fiscally responsible, operationally sound, and fully paid for," he said.

“In recent months and weeks, I have heard from many members, of both parties, expressing strong interest in working on a bipartisan compromise on small business health care cost and access. We have begun conversations toward that goal, though much hard work remains. I look forward to working with the Chairman and others.”

Enzi also commended ongoing experimental efforts at the state level to expand access to health care, but said that “One of the more difficult questions we need to address is whether what may work in a large state may not work in other parts of the country, especially in small or rural states.”

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