



For Immediate Release

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***HELP COMMITTEE ADOPTS ENZI AMENDMENT TO REQUIRE STRONGER WARNING LABELS ON TOBACCO PRODUCTS***

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today said he was pleased that the HELP Committee agreed to include his amendment that requires stronger warnings labels on tobacco product packages. The amendment was added to a flawed Democrat bill, S.625, that would require FDA to regulate tobacco, but fails to give the agency the full authority it would need to combat tobacco use effectively.

“While I still believe that this bill is fundamentally flawed, I am glad we were able to pass this amendment to strengthen it in ways that will truly make a difference,” Enzi said. “Stronger, graphic warnings about the dangers of tobacco use are a proven method to get people to stop smoking, or, better yet, never to start.

“The warnings on cigarette and smokeless tobacco packages haven’t changed in more than 20 years. Other countries have discovered innovative ways to re-emphasize the risks of tobacco. These warnings convey the truth in no uncertain terms and have been shown to work.”

Stronger warning labels are key part of Enzi’s alternative bill, the “Help End Addiction to Lethal Tobacco Habits Act” (HEALTH Act). This legislation, which he introduced last week, would wipe out tobacco use in America through an innovative cap-and-trade program that will shrink the size of the tobacco market over the next 20 years.

The Enzi amendment would require that warning labels cover at least 50 percent of tobacco product packages. The labels must also include full-color, graphic images.

“We should want kids thinking about taking up this deadly habit to have a bit of a shock when they look at the package. We should want smokers to think about these health messages each time they light up.”

Enzi said that Canada has a set of large, bold, full-color graphics, with very direct and sometimes shocking messages about the effects of smoking on every package. According to studies in Canada, these warnings are working.

Approximately one fifth of participants reported smoking less as a result of the labels; only 1 percent reported smoking more. Although participants reported negative emotional responses to the warnings including fear (44 percent ) and disgust (58 percent), smokers who reported greater negative emotion were more likely to have quit, attempted to quit, or reduced their smoking 3 months later.

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