



For Immediate Release

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Wednesday, July 30, 2008

***ENZI DENOUNCES HOUSE PASSAGE OF
"MARLBORO PROTECTION ACT"
"BIG TOBACCO SUPPORTS THIS BILL
BECAUSE IT WILL NOT STOP ANYONE FROM SMOKING"***

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today denounced passage by the House of Representatives of a so-called tobacco regulation bill he said "coddles Big Tobacco while protecting the industry's best tools to recruit and addict your children to tobacco."

"Trying to make cigarettes safer through a billion-dollar bureaucracy is a waste of time and money," Enzi said. "The right approach is to get people to stop smoking, or better yet, never to start. Big Tobacco supports this bill because it will not stop anyone from smoking.

"Tobacco is one of the biggest contributors to our nation's growing health care crisis. We need to fight the war on tobacco head on, not sign a peace treaty with Philip Morris, a company that perpetuates and profits from the crisis. Big Tobacco supports this bill because they have a stake in maintaining the status quo. I don't. They're happy with a bill that doesn't stop people from smoking; I'm not. I want real change, so I'm going to fight this bill and its Big Tobacco backers by objecting to it in the Senate."

Enzi noted that the bill would allow Big Tobacco to continue its aggressive marketing to kids by exempting menthol from a list of banned flavorings. Menthol is used by Big Tobacco to target and lure young smokers, particularly African-Americans. "Last year, during HELP Committee consideration of this bill, I filed several amendments addressing the menthol issue. Folks need to understand this glaring loophole in the bill and how it puts our kids at risk.

"We know that Big Tobacco targets children and teenagers – particularly young African-Americans – by aggressively marketing menthol cigarettes to them," Enzi said. "So why does this bill ban almost every type of flavoring in tobacco products *except* menthol? Supporters of this bill claim they want to protect children and families from unscrupulous tobacco companies, but the only people this approach protects is Big Tobacco."

The House today approved the “Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act,” H.R. 1108, a bill that would require the regulation of tobacco products by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The bill would gut the authority that Congress has bestowed and staunchly defended for the FDA – the authority to remove health threats from the marketplace, Enzi maintained. Philip Morris, the nation’s largest cigarette maker, helped draft the bill.

“Poison peddlers shouldn't get to decide how we fight the war against their deadly products. I urge my friends in the public health community not to become so desperate to do something about the tobacco problem in this country that they fall for this wolf in sheep’s clothing,” Enzi added. “Keep asking yourself: if this bill is good for Big Tobacco, how can it be good for public health? The fact is it can’t. This bill is nothing more than a ‘Marlboro Protection Act,’ written to keep Philip Morris at the top of the tobacco market.”

Enzi urged his colleagues to consider legislation he introduced last year to 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.

“Tobacco kills. We need new ideas to tackle tobacco use,” Enzi said. “That’s what my legislation does. My bill contains a novel cap-and-trade program that will guarantee that fewer people suffer the deadly consequences of smoking, while providing flexibility in how those reductions are achieved.”

The Enzi proposal, the “Help End Addiction to Lethal Tobacco Habits Act” (HEALTH Act), S. 1834, would also close loopholes in the law that tobacco companies have exploited and enjoyed for far too long. It would use proven approaches to help people stop using tobacco products and implement tried and true prevention programs.

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