



For Immediate Release

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***ENZI: COMMUNITY COLLEGES PROVIDE HIGH-VALUE,
HIGH-RETURN, LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES
- CALLS ON CONGRESS TO RENEW CRITICAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT -***

Washington D.C. – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, R-WY, Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), said a report released today demonstrates that, “America’s community colleges are doing a tremendous job of controlling costs while providing lifelong learning opportunities to prepare America’s students and workers for the high-skill, high-wage, high-demand jobs of the 21st Century.”

Enzi called on Congress to do its part to assist community colleges by renewing and improving the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

“Community colleges, which serve an increasingly diverse, low-income, and non-traditional student population, play a key role in securing access to lifelong education and training opportunities for all students and workers,” Enzi said. “They also are leading the charge on containing costs and keeping postsecondary education affordable.”

According to the College Board’s report, <http://www.collegeboard.com/html/costs/pricing/> community college tuition and fees rose just 4.7 percent last year, compared to a 6.4 percent cost increase for in-state students at public 4-year institutions, and 5.9 percent increase at private, non-profit 4-year schools.

“Congress needs to renew and improve the Workforce Investment Act so that these programs can continue to provide affordable opportunities to help our workers succeed in the 21st century, global economy,” Enzi said. “Improving access to higher education and job training programs is essential for American students to develop the knowledge and skills needed to secure high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand jobs.”

Enzi noted a report released in May by the Government Accountability Office, titled “Community Colleges and One-Stop Centers Collaborate to Meet 21st Century Workforce Needs,” <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d08547.pdf>, which highlights the successes that community colleges and one-stop centers have had in preparing workers for jobs in

high growth industries, and linking job training to local workforce needs. However, the report concludes that WIA performance measures need to be updated, and notes that unstable WIA funding makes program planning difficult.

Senator Enzi, who requested the GAO report with Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), has worked hard to make sure that any WIA reauthorization bill will include changes to stabilize the flow of federal funding so that states can plan better and more fully utilize WIA to educate and train their workforce.

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