



For Immediate Release

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***ENZI SAYS STATES CAN OFFER IMPORTANT INSIGHTS
ON NATIONAL HEALTH CARE REFORMS***

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY) said today dramatic changes imposed on market rules in the name of health care reform could do more harm than good if Congress moves too quickly and without taking into account the lessons learned by state-based health reform efforts.

“Forcing states to dramatically change their insurance market rules too quickly could result in some very serious unintended consequences,” Enzi said, during today’s HELP Committee Round Table, “Learning from the States: Individual State Experiences with Health Care Reform Coverage Initiatives in the Context of National Reform.”

“While it is critical that we get the policy of insurance market reform right, and increase the value of our health care dollar, without the right process, we can’t move forward on the best health care reforms for the American people.”

He again warned that if the Senate’s Majority leadership and the Administration attempt to use the budget reconciliation process to jam health care reform through the Senate, it will be sending a clear signal they are not interested in a truly bipartisan effort.

“The first real test of whether the new Administration and Senate leaders are serious about developing bipartisan solutions was how the budget conference report addressed health care reform. The majority failed that test,” Enzi said. “Reconciliation will cut off most avenues for real debate in the Senate and is intended primarily as a tool to reduce the deficit.”

During the Round Table, Enzi, Ranking Member of the HELP Committee, said state-based health care reforms already in place should be carefully reviewed as Congress works to enact national health reforms, noting that a diverse country with strong differences of opinion must always find unique ways of solving problems.

“National health care reform will impact the lives of millions of Americans in every state, and, it is important to remember that our states are sometimes very different,” he said. “Many of our states have taken on the laudable goal of improving the health of their citizens but have done so in different ways. Washington needs to remember that.”

Enzi also renewed his call to focus on expanding coverage while also improving quality and getting more value out of our health care system, saying, “Our current pace of spending is not sustainable and we must get our health care costs under control. I believe we can do that and I’m interested in hearing ideas from those on today’s panel who have experience in working to bring down costs.”

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