

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Craig Orfield
Wednesday, January 26, 2005
202-224-6770

HELP CHAIRMAN ENZI APPLAUDS SENATE'S CONFIRMATION OF LEAVITT
AS SECRETARY OF HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, R-WY, Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today praised the Senate's confirmation of Governor Mike Leavitt to serve as Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS). The Senate confirmed the nomination by a voice vote Wednesday.

"President Bush chose wisely when he nominated Governor Leavitt for this important post. He is a strong leader and an able administrator, and his record provides the proof of his ability to get results," Enzi said Wednesday. "His service as Utah's governor gives him a wealth of experience in the challenges of providing access to affordable healthcare."

"In my new capacity as Chairman of the HELP Committee, I am pleased that I will have the opportunity to work with Governor Leavitt," Enzi added. "In addition, my Committee is looking forward to working with Governor Leavitt to find solutions to the healthcare challenges we face as a nation." He also praised Leavitt as "a westerner who understands the particular healthcare problems that affect folks who live in rural and frontier areas."

Enzi expects to work closely with Leavitt to improve the nation's healthcare system by increasing patient safety through more widespread use of information technology, ensuring that medications are safe and effective, and by better protecting the country from the danger of bioterrorism.

"We need to strengthen our healthcare safety net to protect the most vulnerable among us," Enzi said. "And, perhaps most importantly, we need to do everything we can so that more affordable health insurance options are available to working families and small businesses. I have no doubt that Governor Leavitt will be an outstanding partner and ally in the fight to achieve those goals."

The HELP Committee reviewed Leavitt's nomination on January 18. A poll of each member resulted in the unanimous support of his nomination and a recommendation that the full Senate confirm him as HHS Secretary.