

*News from the*

**U.S. Senate Committee on  
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions**

**Michael B. Enzi (Wyoming), Chairman**



**For Immediate Release**

**Contact: Craig Orfield 202.224.6770**

**September 15, 2005**

**Enzi Praises Martinez-Keller Bill --  
Will Ease Financial Burden on Students Affected by Hurricane Katrina**

---

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 work of Senator Mel Martinez (R-FL) and Congressman Ric Keller (R-FL) to extend financial aid relief for college students in areas hit by Hurricane Katrina.

Enzi remarks came as the Senate passed the "Pell Grant Hurricane and Disaster Relief Act," H.R.3169, a bill targeted to provide that relief for grants awarded to students affected by Katrina. The bill was sponsored by Martinez and was originally introduced in the House by Keller.

"Senator Martinez and Congressman Keller have done great work in spearheading the effort to move this needed legislation forward quickly," Enzi said. "Helping students in the affected areas avoid additional debt at a difficult time when their lives have been turned upside down is urgently needed. All of Congress is working hard to get the people affected by this tragedy the assistance they need," Enzi added.

H.R 3169 gives the Secretary of Education authority to waive repayment of Pell Grants by students who were residing in, employed in, or attending an institution of higher education located in a major disaster area. Students may also qualify if: their attendance was interrupted because of the disaster's impact on them or the institution; and if their withdrawal ended within the academic year during

which the major disaster designation occurred; or during the next succeeding academic year.

Under current law, Pell Grant recipients who are forced to withdraw from classes due to a natural disaster are required to repay any Pell Grant funds used to pay for school expenses. If those grants are not repaid, the recipients are barred from enrolling in future classes.

“As Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, I’ve already held listening sessions to hear from the people most affected by Katrina,” Enzi said. “We have more work to do to aid these victims and we will provide the relief needed – including aid for students and schools. My colleagues and I continue to work on a more comprehensive education package for Katrina relief, which should be completed in the next few days.”

###