

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 22, 2005**

Senate Clears Bill Providing Employment and Job Training Assistance for Hurricane Katrina Victims

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee today said the Senate has approved the “Flexibility for Displaced Workers Act,” an employment and job training assistance package for victims of Hurricane Katrina, which will help workers displaced by the disaster get back to work and rebuild their lives and communities.

The bill, H.R. 3761, is a companion to Enzi and Kennedy’s “Hurricane Katrina Employment and Training Assistance Act,” S.1718, and provides increased flexibility to National Emergency Grants (NEG) in order to make more jobs and training available to workers displaced as a result of Hurricane Katrina. It now awaits the President’s signature.

It also will provide subsidies to hire workers for public sector jobs unrelated to the disaster, giving displaced workers additional temporary employment opportunities during the recovery and rebuilding.

“Moms and Dads struggling to keep families together following this disaster need opportunities to earn wages and provide for their families,” Enzi said. “With this bill we will build on existing federal grant-making authority to encourage more temporary jobs that will help meet the needs of those displaced families. Projects eligible for the expanded grants may include rebuilding projects directly

related to relief in the Gulf Coast as well as unrelated public works needed in communities outside the disaster area.”

The relief bill was approved by the Senate late Wednesday. “As always, Senator Kennedy was vital in securing passage of this important legislation,” Enzi said. “His hard work and leadership on these issues are unparalleled.”

H.R. 3761 will provide expanded employment and job training assistance authorized under the “Workforce Investment Act” by:

- Allowing subsidized employment in public sector jobs not related to the disaster;
- Allowing previously awarded NEG funds as well as new grants to be used employment and training assistance targeted to workers affected by Hurricane Katrina;
- Expanding eligibility for jobs and training to individuals who are employed and have no work history in addition to those who lost their jobs as a result of Katrina;
- Authorizing needs related payments to individuals receiving employment assistance if they do not qualify or have ceased to qualify for unemployment compensation;
- Encouraging the use of mobile One-Stop Centers for employment and training assistance and expanded operational hours for One-Stop Centers during the recovery;
- Expanding the duration of temporary employment projects from 6 months to 12 months if necessary.

###