

News from the

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

Michael B. Enzi (Wyoming), Chairman



**For Immediate Release
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***SURVEY SHOWS OVERWHELMING BIPARTISAN SUPPORT FOR
SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH PLANS;
ENZI, NELSON, BURNS URGE FULL SENATE TO RESPOND BY
PASSING S.1955***

Washington, D.C. – A survey gauging public support for allowing small business health plans, a key objective of “The Health Insurance Marketplace Modernization and Affordability Act,” S.1955, found that 89 percent of people surveyed favored the small business health plan concept, while just six percent are opposed, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, confirmed today.

The survey, prepared by Public Opinion Strategies and Lake Research Partners for the National Association of Realtors (NAR) and released today, also shows broad bipartisan support for the proposal, with 93 percent of Republicans, 88 percent of Independents, and 86 percent of Democrats favoring a small business health purchasing plan. The survey can be viewed by visiting:
[http://www.realtors.org/PublicAffairsWeb.nsf/files/SBHPPol132806.ppt/\\$FILE/SBHPPol132806.ppt](http://www.realtors.org/PublicAffairsWeb.nsf/files/SBHPPol132806.ppt/$FILE/SBHPPol132806.ppt)

“The results of the survey go to the heart of why the Senate should pass S.1955 now: the people who make up the bedrock of our economy – small, family owned

businesses – have overwhelmingly issued a mandate for change,” Enzi said. “Allowing small businesses to pool together, combined with relieving regulatory burdens, will improve the business climate and provide more health insurance choices for working families.”

S.1955, which was introduced by Enzi and cosponsored by Senator Ben Nelson (D-NE) and Senator Conrad Burns (R-MT), will allow business and trade associations to band their members together and offer group health coverage on a national or regional basis in direct response to runaway costs that are driving far too many employers and families from comprehensive health insurance.

Senator Nelson said: “This survey confirms what we’ve all been hearing from our constituents: health insurance costs are out of control and a vast majority support lower health costs for small businesses. Our bill will lower health insurance costs for small businesses by giving them purchasing power, and it will expand access to health insurance for nearly one million American workers.”

Senator Burns said: “Chairman Enzi and I spoke with a number of Montana small business owners, including realtors, this past weekend in Billings and they strongly support this legislation. I now look forward to quickly moving this legislation so they may begin providing their employees with affordable, high quality health care as soon as possible.”

The HELP Committee ended a decade long stalemate on health insurance reform by voting in favor of S. 1955 on March 15. The bill awaits consideration by the full Senate.

Some key findings of the NAR survey include:

Thirty-five percent of voters nationally report that the current health care system is not meeting their own needs or the needs of their families.

-- The 25 percent of voters who work in America’s smallest companies (companies with less than 10 employees) are having the most difficulty. Forty-eight percent of these voters say the health care system is not meeting their own needs or the needs of their families.

-- Almost one quarter of voters (23 percent) have gone without health insurance coverage at some point over the last three years.

Access to healthcare plans is a bigger problem for individuals in the lowest income brackets and those working in America’s small businesses.

-- Among the 24 percent of respondents who work for companies with 100 employees or fewer, 37 percent are dissatisfied with their access to a wide

variety of healthcare plans. That number drops to 27 percent dissatisfied among those working in companies with more than 100 employees.

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