



For Immediate Release

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***HELP COMMITTEE PASSES BILLS TO EXPAND RESEARCH  
INTO PREMATURE BIRTH, BREAST CANCER***

**Washington, DC** – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today announced the Committee’s passage of two bills, the “Prematurity Research Expansion and Education for Mothers who deliver Early (PREEMIE) Act,” and the “Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act.”

“One in eight babies in the United States is born premature, and that number has grown in recent years,” Enzi said. “This has devastating physical, emotional, and financial effects for infants, mothers, and their families. Yet, most premature births could be prevented. This bill is a small but important step toward that goal.”

The “PREEMIE Act,” S. 707, is designed to expand research into causes of and prevention of premature births, and to increase education and support services related to prematurity.

“By expanding, intensifying, and coordinating research into premature births, this bill will aim to reduce rates of premature delivery, promote evidence-based care and treatment for women and infants, and reduce infant mortality and disabilities caused by prematurity,” Enzi said.

“I want to thank Senator Lamar Alexander, who sponsored the PREEMIE bill, for his leadership on this issue,” Enzi added. “As a parent and a grandparent, I appreciate his efforts to expand research into premature labor, get information out to expecting mothers, and provide care and support for pre-term infants and their families.”

**Senator Alexander (R-TN) said:** “Premature infants are 14 times more likely to die in their first year than infants who are carried to term. We need to do all we can to help parents raise healthy children and this bill targets the earliest and most critical stages of a child’s life. I’m very pleased the committee has approved this legislation.”

**Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) said:** “We all know the challenges – and all too often the heartbreak – that come from premature births. We simply don’t know enough

about the causes of pre-term labor, but this bill aims to change that. This is a major step forward in giving every child a healthy start to life.”

**The “Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act,” S. 757**, also passed today, creates a national strategy to conduct research into the possible links between breast cancer and the environment. It establishes a grant program to fund collaborative centers to expand and coordinate research across institutions and disciplines, encourage the development of innovative approaches to study under-explored areas of the environment and breast cancer, and outline key research questions.

“Breast cancer is one of the greatest health challenges facing American women and their health care providers today,” Enzi said. “Although we have come a long way in combating this disease, we are still far from where we’d like to be. This bill will help us improve our understanding of possible environmental causes and potential methods of preventing breast cancer.”

“I commend Senator Lincoln Chafee, Senator Jim Talent, Senator Orrin Hatch and Senator Mike DeWine for spearheading this important effort,” Enzi added.

**Senator Lincoln Chafee (R-RI) said:** “This is a great first step in the enactment of legislation that holds the promise for a better understanding of the causes of breast cancer, breakthroughs in prevention and treatment, and ultimately a cure. For many years, scientists have researched the genetic variations that can lead to breast cancer, but the environmental causes have largely been ignored. I hope the combined commitment of all those who worked to approve this legislation in the committee will bring this bill to the forefront of women’s health issues in Congress.”

**Senator Jim Talent (R-MO) said:** “Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among women in the United States. It’s important to support and provide resources for researchers and healthcare professionals to find a cure for this life-threatening disease that affects nearly three million women in the U.S. I look forward to continuing our efforts in the fight against breast cancer.”

**Senator Hatch said:** “This bill will go a long way in helping the scientific community explore environmental triggers of breast cancer so that we may have a better idea of how to prevent it, treat it more effectively, and cure it.”

Concluded Senator Enzi: “I appreciate all the hard work of my colleagues to ensure that we were able to bring these bills to mark up, and I hope we can bring them to the floor of the Senate for a vote as quickly as possible.”

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