



For Immediate Release

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***HELP COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVES BILL TO
PROTECT, SERVE NATION'S SENIOR CITIZENS***

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today announced Committee passage of the "Older Americans Act," S. 3570, a bipartisan reauthorization bill which will enrich the lives and well being of older Americans through a range of social service programs, including home-delivered nutrition, community service employment, long-term care coordination and elder abuse and neglect prevention.

"This bill will help ensure that our nation's older Americans, including 78.2 million aging Baby Boomers, are healthy, fed, housed, able to get where they need to go and safe from abuse and scams," Enzi said.

The legislation, which was first enacted in 1965, was approved unanimously and is cosponsored by the Committee's Ranking Member, Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Retirement Security and Aging, Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH), and the Subcommittee's Ranking Member, Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD).

"The number one resolution of the 2005 White House Conference on Aging called upon Congress to reauthorize the Older Americans Act during the 109th Congress. I am pleased that the Senate and the House are well on the way to accomplishing that goal on behalf of one of our nation's greatest resources – older Americans."

"As Chairman of the HELP Committee, I am deeply grateful to Senator Kennedy, Senator DeWine, and Senator Mikulski for the leadership and support in making this bipartisan reauthorization possible," Enzi concluded.

Key provisions of the "Older Americans Act" Reauthorization will:

- Create a National Center on Senior Benefits Outreach and Enrollment to help educate eligible older individuals on the benefits of enrolling in Federal and State programs;

- Create an Office of Elder Abuse Prevention and Services to carry out elder justice programs;
- Reduce the eligibility age of a grandparent or relative caregiver caring for a child from 60 to 55, and expand on the definition of children eligible to receive these services;
- Encourage the creation of innovative models that allow individuals to remain in their home as they age;
- Allow an individual with Alzheimer's disease, who is 50 years of age or older, coverage under the caregiver support program;
- Encourage mental health screening in attempt to create awareness of the disease and reduce the stigma attached to the disease;
- Encourage communities to prepare for the influx of the baby boom generation;
- Focus on consumer-driven care and empowerment of the individual when planning for their long-term care needs.

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