



For Immediate Release

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***ENZI: HOUSE APPROVES RYAN WHITE CARE ACT REAUTHORIZATION;  
BILL AWAITS PRESIDENT'S SIGNATURE***

**Washington, D.C.** – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, said today the House of Representatives has passed the “Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resource Emergency Act” (RWCA), delivering another victory for people living with HIV/AIDS by “ensuring that services and supports are available to all those in need, regardless of race, gender, or where they live.”

“Final Congressional passage of this bill is a great victory for people struggling to live with HIV/AIDS but who have not been able to receive the care they deserve due to flawed funding formulas under the previous Ryan White CARE Act,” Enzi said. “We have addressed the epidemic of today, not yesterday, by modernizing the RWCA to ensure federal funds follow the person being treated – wherever they live.”

On Tuesday, Senate negotiators broke an impasse that had stalled the programs’ reauthorization since early fall. The final compromise bill passed today modifies the “Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act,” H.R. 6143, which the House passed weeks ago, to provide a three-year reauthorization. The bill now await President Bush’s signature into law.

“We have spent months at the negotiating table trying to reach an agreement,” Enzi said. “I am very pleased that we were finally able to reach that agreement, and am deeply grateful to everyone in Congress who has made passage of this bill a reality.”

The RWCA reauthorization bill approved today by unanimous consent in the House will save lives by increasing overall investment in Ryan White programs and revising flawed funding formulas, which currently favor states with urban areas and a longer history of AIDS infections over states where the disease is now spreading most rampantly. It better targets funding so that infected persons have better access to high quality health care, improves accountability for health outcomes, and ensures more equitable treatment opportunities for all persons with HIV/AIDS.

“The Ryan White Care Act is one of our nation’s hallmark examples of caring and compassion, therefore we must Enzi said. “I commend the Committee’s Ranking Member, Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA), the Committee’s Ranking Member, for his hard work on this vital legislation.

Enzi also praised the commitment of Congressman Joe Barton (R-TX), Chairman of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, and Congressman John Dingell (D-MI), the Committee’s Ranking Member, to reach an agreement on the RWCA reauthorization. “The passage of this bill shows that when we roll up our sleeves and work together across party lines, we can get things done.”

The Ryan White CARE Act was initiated in 1990 to provide treatment and care for individuals who are in the greatest need of assistance.

“While we have made significant progress in understanding and treating this disease, there is still much more to do to save lives through education and treatment and to ensure equitable treatment for all Americans infected with HIV/AIDS,” Enzi said.

Key provisions of the bill include:

- Maintaining funding levels of Title 1 and Title 2 at 95% of FY 2006 funding, and never allowing funding to fall below 95% of what states and cities received in 2006;
- Requesting that HHS provide a methodology to more accurately convey the need within an area or State so that funding decisions can be more equitable; and
- Allowing the law to sunset after the 3 years, reaffirming the need to readdress the overall structure of the law to better meet the needs of those living with HIV/AIDS.

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