



For Immediate Release

Contact: Craig Orfield  
(202) 224-6770

Thursday, April 12, 2007

***ENZI CALLS FOR INCREASED EDUCATION, TRAINING  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN TO IMPROVE EARNINGS,  
REDUCE WAGE GAP***

Washington, D.C. – At today’s Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee hearing titled “Closing the Gap: Equal Pay for Women Workers,” U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Ranking Member of the HELP Committee, emphasized that there are a large number of factors not related to employer discrimination that contribute to the wage gap.

Enzi also dismissed calls to impose new, burdensome penalties on employers, which would do little to advance women workers in non-traditional jobs.

“Many of these factors boil down to matters of choice – choice of career, choice of academic pursuit, choice of hours and work location, as well the choice to remain in the labor force or to leave it temporarily or permanently,” Enzi said.

“If we are serious about reducing the earnings gap between men and women in this country, we need to create more opportunities for women to gain the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in high-paying, traditionally male-dominated fields, and we need to encourage them to take advantage of those opportunities,” Enzi said. “Education and training opportunities, not government wage control, are the best ways that we as a Congress can improve earning potential for America’s workers.”

Enzi said that the Democrat-sponsored “Paycheck Fairness Act,” S. 766, would not address these issues; rather, it would impose increased liability on employers for pay inequities that have nothing to do with gender.

“Discrimination in any forum, including the workplace, is simply intolerable and should be punished to the full extent of the law,” Enzi said. “However, exposing employers to increased litigation and significantly increased liability to correct pay inequities that are not related to gender is not an acceptable approach to combat discrimination or eliminate the pay gap.”

Enzi highlighted programs in Wyoming that have helped encourage women to enter nontraditional fields and provide them with the knowledge and skills to follow

those career paths. One program, “Climb Wyoming,” has trained and placed 135 mothers in fields like short haul trucking, welding, and construction trades. Many graduates of this program are earning double or even triple their pre-program salaries.

“Just as we should be wary of government intervention to manipulate wage rates that are the function of individual choice; we must be aggressive in pursuing initiatives that eradicate wage disparity through training and education,” Enzi said. “We can begin to ensure a lifetime of education and training opportunities for every American by reauthorizing critical legislation like the Workforce Investment Act and the Higher Education Act this year.”

###