



For Immediate Release

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***HELP COMMITTEE REPUBLICANS CALL ON SENATE LEADERSHIP NOT TO DROP THE BALL ON HIGHER EDUCATION***

**Washington, D.C.** - U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today sent a letter signed by nine Committee Republicans to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), urging them to ensure that the two higher education bills approved by the HELP Committee in June are considered together by the full Senate in July.

“The HELP Committee has taken the first step toward approving two key higher education bills that will make college more affordable, help protect students from burdensome debt, and ensure that American students have the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy,” Enzi said. “We must not kick the can down the road and allow the reconciliation bill move forward without the important reforms included in the reauthorization bill.”

On June 20, the HELP Committee approved two separate pieces of legislation: S. 1642, the Higher Education Amendments of 2007, which reauthorizes the discretionary programs within the Higher Education Act; and S. 1762, the Higher Education Access Act of 2007, a reconciliation bill that responds to the Budget Resolution adopted earlier this year.

“If the Senate moves forward with just the Higher Education Access Act, which as a budget bill has privileged status, we lose an important opportunity to pass essential bipartisan reforms contained in the Higher Education Amendments bill,” the Senators wrote. “More importantly, moving the reconciliation bill without the reauthorization bill would result making significant cuts to education subsidies, while ignoring important ethical, privacy, and disclosure requirements taken from Republican bills.”

Enzi said key reforms in the reauthorization bill include: simplifying the student aid application process, authorizing a year-round Pell Grant to better serve non-traditional students, and expanding graduate programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Serving Institutions.

Senator Enzi, Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH), Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Senator Pat Roberts (R-KS), Senator Richard Burr (R-NC), Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA), Senator Wayne Allard (R-CO), and Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) signed the letter.

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