



For Immediate Release

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***ENZI ANNOUNCES SENATE PASSAGE OF BILL TO PROTECT  
AMERICA'S SENIOR CITIZENS FROM FALLS***

**Washington D.C.** – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, R-WY, Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), applauded last night's Senate passage of the "Safety of Seniors (S.O.S.) Act of 2007," S. 845, an innovative bill designed to expand research on approaches to fall prevention and treatment for America's senior citizens.

"For many of our nation's seniors, a fall means serious injury and often leads to a rapid decline in health," Enzi said. "This act will help prevent falls and save lives through education, prevention and early intervention. By reducing the occurrences and costs of falls, this bill will help to secure the health and safety of America's seniors."

Falls represent a serious health risk for millions of older Americans. In the United States, one of every three persons age 65 and older falls each year. Falls are the leading cause of injury deaths and the most common cause of injuries and hospital admissions for trauma for older adults.

The S.O.S. Act will direct the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to oversee and support national and local education campaigns focusing on reducing falls among older adults and preventing repeat falls. The bill also calls for the Secretary of HHS to evaluate the effect of falls on health care costs, the potential for reducing falls, and the most effective strategies for reducing fall-related health care costs.

"I would like to thank Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) for her diligence and her years of dedication to the prevention of falls among older adults," Enzi said. "I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House of Representatives to reach final passage of this bill."

The S.O.S. Act authorizes the Secretary of Health and Human Services to:

- develop effective public education strategies in a national initiative to reduce falls among older adults in order to educate older adults, family members, employers, caregivers, and others;

- intensify services and conduct research to determine the most effective approaches to prevent and treat falls among older adults;
- award demonstration grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements to qualified organizations, institutions, or consortia of qualified organizations and institutions to design, implement, and evaluate fall prevention programs and use proven intervention strategies in residential and institutional settings; and,
- evaluate the effect of falls on health care costs, the potential for reducing falls, and the most effective strategies for reducing health care costs associated with falls.

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