



For Immediate Release

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***ENZI SAYS INVESTIGATION DOES NOT SUPPORT ALLEGATIONS  
OF MISCONDUCT IN AUTISM RESEARCH***

**Washington, D.C.** – Following an eighteen-month investigation requested by parents of children with autism, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today said that allegations of misconduct in connection with the findings by public health authorities that thimerosal, a preservative once used in vaccines, does not cause autism cannot be confirmed.

“With up to 1 in 166 children being diagnosed with autism in the United States, it is vital that we improve our understanding of the causes, symptoms, interventions, and supports and services available for individuals with autism spectrum disorder,” Enzi added. “But for the most part, the allegations brought to the HELP Committee’s attention cannot be confirmed.”

The Committee’s investigators concluded that allegations that autism researchers were clouded by conflicts of interest, that the CDC interfered in vaccine studies, and that public health agencies covered up evidence linking vaccines to autism, could not be substantiated.

“Our investigation shows that public health officials conducted thorough, science-based studies on autism and vaccines,” Enzi said.

Enzi’s comments came as the Committee released the Executive Summary of the report, “Thimerosal and Autism Spectrum Disorders: Alleged Misconduct by Government Agencies and Private Entities.” A copy of the summary is available at:

[http://help.senate.gov/Min\\_press/autism.pdf](http://help.senate.gov/Min_press/autism.pdf)

“While I recognize there are active scientific debates regarding a possible connection between thimerosal in childhood vaccines and autism, Congress is not in a position to substitute its judgment for that of scientists,” Enzi said. “Therefore, my investigation focused not on the possible link between thimerosal and autism, but on the

allegations of misconduct by government officials and private entities in connection with the thimerosal controversy.”

Beginning in 2005, the HELP Committee, then under Enzi’s Chairmanship, conducted an 18-month investigation into allegations of misconduct on the part of individuals and US government officials related to the use of the preservative thimerosal in childhood vaccines and its possible contribution to an increase in rates of autism. Over the course of the investigation, Enzi’s staff interviewed more than 80 individuals and examined tens of thousands of pages of documents. His staff spoke with a number of parents of children with autism about their concerns and their experiences, as well as individuals from the scientific community.

Last year, Congress passed into law the Combating Autism Act, P.L. 109-416. . The act , which passed both the Senate and House unanimously, authorizes \$945 million dollars over five years for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to help combat autism through research, screening, intervention and education. It will expand research at National Institutes of Health (NIH) with regard to the possible causes and potential interventions for people living with autism, increase autism awareness through Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and coordinate health, education, and disability programs for persons diagnosed with ASD and other developmental disabilities.

“We are taking steps to help ensure that there are effective programs in place to meet the diverse needs of persons with autism and their families, and that these programs work in close coordination with one another,” Enzi said.

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