



For Immediate Release

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Tuesday, October 9, 2007

ENZI DENOUNCES HOUSE DEMOCRAT LEADERSHIP FOR USING HIDDEN PROVISION TO ROB DISADVANTAGED AMERICANS OF CRITICALLY NEEDED HIV/AIDS FUNDING

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today blew the whistle on House Democrat Leadership for using a hidden provision in an appropriations bill to undermine the Ryan White CARE Act reauthorization passed last year, which would ensure more equitable distribution of funds to combat HIV/AIDS in areas of the United States where the disease is growing most.

“House Democrat Leadership has craftily and quietly snuck a provision into an appropriations bill that would rob disadvantaged individuals, living in underserved areas of the country, of money they desperately need for HIV/AIDS treatment,” Enzi said. “This shameful action goes against the very core of the mission of the Ryan White reauthorization passed last year, which revised critically flawed funding formulas to ensure that federal dollars are used to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic of today, not yesterday.”

A Government Accountability Office (GAO) report recently released confirmed that a provision added by House Democrat Leadership to the House appropriations bill for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, H.R. 3043, would take away \$9.3 million dollars from areas of the country that have been underserved by Ryan White for years, and give it to areas that have been receiving far more than their fair share of federal dollars. For example, San Francisco, which has a declining HIV/AIDS population, would rob the neediest cities of lifesaving funding. House Democrat Leadership would earmark \$6.1 million for San Francisco.

“Because of flawed funding formulas previously in Ryan White, there are people in rural and Southern areas – where the HIV/AIDS epidemic is spreading most rapidly – who are dying while on waiting lists to get the treatment they need,” Enzi said. “The reauthorization bill we passed prevents that. Yet Speaker Pelosi and House Leadership are more concerned with funneling even more money into San Francisco than with saving lives in places where people are dying to get that money.”

Senator Enzi and others who were instrumental in passing last year’s Ryan White reauthorization bill today wrote a letter to Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Senator Arlen

Specter (R-PA), Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, asking them to oppose inclusion of this provision in the Senate bill.

“If this provision is allowed to stand, AIDS healthcare disparities will continue,” the Senators wrote. “Outdated funding formulas that have disadvantaged minority populations in the Southeast for years will continue. These outdated formulas have caused fatalities in parts of the nation where people are on waiting lists for life saving drugs while older centers of the epidemic are unable to spend all the funding they receive for HIV/AIDS care.”

The RWCA reauthorization bill signed into law last year saves 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, improve accountability for health outcomes, and ensure more equitable treatment opportunities for all persons with HIV/AIDS. The House Leadership rider guts the fair funding formulas that save lives.

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October 9, 2007

MICHAEL ENZI
WYOMING

COMMITTEES:

Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
Ranking Member
Banking, Housing and
Urban Affairs
Small Business
Budget

Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman, Subcommittee on
Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related
Agencies

Honorable Arlen Specter
Ranking Member,
Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related
Agencies

Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Specter:

In July, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 3043, the House appropriations bill for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. This bill, as written, includes a hidden provision imperiling the carefully crafted, bipartisan, bicameral compromise reached last Congress to ensure federal HIV/AIDS programs treat all Americans living with HIV/AIDS equally.

This single provision would reverse updated funding formulas that recognize the HIV/AIDS epidemic is shifting. It will un hinge a compromise that took both chambers and both sides of the aisle two years to develop in close consultation with AIDS service organizations, stakeholders, members of the community, and the Administration.

If this provision is allowed to stand, AIDS healthcare disparities will continue. Outdated funding formulas that have disadvantaged minority populations in the Southeast for years will continue. These outdated formulas have caused fatalities in parts of the nation where people are on waiting lists for life saving drugs while older centers of the epidemic are unable to spend all the funding they receive for HIV/AIDS care. The updated funding formulas this provision would seek to undo are currently ensuring that federal AIDS funds are directed to those cities and states shouldering a growing burden of HIV and AIDS cases. In short, the updated formulas ensure that federal HIV/AIDS programs are fighting the epidemic of today and focusing federal efforts on those areas that most need it.

It is particularly important to note that the far-reaching reversal included in the current bill occurred in a vacuum. The stakeholders, AIDS service organizations, and congressional counterparts that have long been at the table on federal HIV/AIDS programs were not consulted or apprised of this provision which will undo years of work based on a decade of research regarding the shifting epidemic.

This provision is not included in current Senate legislation, and we ask that you oppose the inclusion of this Ryan White provision in the Senate appropriations bill for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. We must continue to target our resources to those most in need. We must ensure that those infected with HIV and living with AIDS will receive our support and our compassion, regardless of where they live.

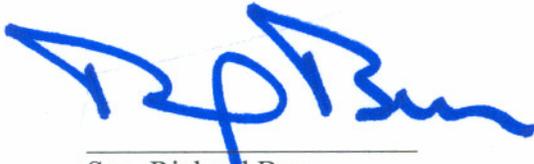
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael B. Enzi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Sen. Michael B. Enzi

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Orrin G. Hatch". The signature is cursive and includes the middle initial "G.".

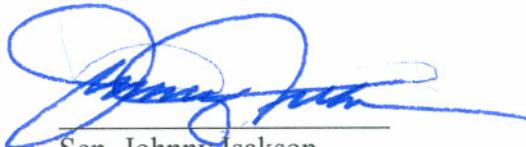
Sen. Orrin Hatch

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard Burr". The signature is bold and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Sen. Richard Burr

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom A. Coburn". The signature is cursive and includes the middle initial "A.".

Sen. Tom Coburn

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Johnny Isakson". The signature is cursive and includes the first name "Johnny".

Sen. Johnny Isakson

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeff Sessions". The signature is cursive and includes the first name "Jeff".

Sen. Jeff Sessions