



For Immediate Release

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***ENZI CALLS FOR RENEWAL OF WORKFORCE TRAINING
PROGRAM, HIGHER EDUCATION ACT
SAYS PROGRAMS ARE ESSENTIAL TO HELP COMMUNITY COLLEGES
PREPARE STUDENTS FOR 21ST CENTURY WORKPLACE***

Washington D.C. – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, R-WY, Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today called on Congress to renew and improve the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the Higher Education Act (HEA), saying that reauthorizing the programs is vital for America's community colleges to help students develop the knowledge and skills to be successful in the 21st Century, global economy.

"Improving access to higher education and job training programs is essential for American students to develop the knowledge and skills needed to secure high-skill, high-wage and high-demand jobs," Enzi said. "Community colleges, which serve an increasingly diverse, low-income, and non-traditional student population, play a key role in securing access to lifelong education and training opportunities for all students and workers."

Speaking to the Business Roundtable's Leader's Forum today, Enzi said that Congress must reauthorize WIA and HEA so that community colleges can continue to provide essential education and training opportunities. The event focused on "The Untapped Potential of Community Colleges."

"Congress needs to renew and improve the Workforce Investment Act and the Higher Education Act to make sure that these programs continue to help our workers succeed in the 21st century, global economy," Enzi said. "However, as long as Congress continues to delay reauthorization of these key programs, they will face funding instability, and they will not be able to keep pace with the increasing skill demands of today's workforce."

Enzi noted a recent report by the Government Accountability Office, titled "Community Colleges and One-Stop Centers Collaborate to Meet 21st Century Workforce Needs," GAO-08-547, which highlights the successes that community colleges and one-stop centers have had in preparing workers for jobs in high growth industries, and linking job training to local workforce needs. However, the report

concludes that WIA performance measures need to be updated, and notes that unstable WIA funding makes program planning difficult.

Senator Enzi, who requested the GAO report with Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), has worked hard to make sure that any potential WIA reauthorization bill will include changes to stabilize the flow of federal funding so that states can plan better and more fully utilize WIA to educate and train their workforce.

Enzi said he is also working to make a number of improvements to the current HEA law, including provisions that will benefit the non-traditional students who are fast becoming the majority of those who are attending institutions or higher education, especially community colleges.

“By some estimates, nearly 4 out of every 5 new jobs being created will require some education or training beyond high school,” Enzi said. “Congress has an opportunity to renew and improve WIA and HEA to ensure that Americans have the knowledge and skills to fill those jobs and succeed in the workplace. I urge the Democratic leadership of the Senate to take action on these important bills.”

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