



For Immediate Release

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***ENZI: SCIENCE, NOT POLITICS,
SHOULD DRIVE TOBACCO REGULATION***

Washington, D.C. –U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.), Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today said that sound science, not politics, should guide decisions on regulating or banning addictive tobacco flavorings, particularly menthol, used to market cigarettes to kids.

“Tobacco companies use flavors to get kids hooked on cigarettes,” Enzi said. “While the bill before us today would ban the use of some flavorings, it doesn’t cover all flavored products or give us nearly enough flexibility or tools to address the underlying problem.”

At today’s Senate HELP Committee markup on a bill requiring the Food and Drug Administration to approve and regulate tobacco products, Enzi offered an amendment that would require the scientists at FDA to review the data on tobacco flavorings like menthol, and regulate tobacco flavors based on how they impact kids, particularly minority youth. The bill, as written, bans many flavorings outright, but does not ban the most common flavor – menthol.

Enzi raised concerns regarding the preferential marketing of menthol cigarettes to African-American youth. “I think the data on menthol and the targeting of minority youth are pretty compelling, and the data on pineapple are absent,” Enzi said. “But I recognize that others may disagree. I say let the scientists decide.” The Enzi amendment would let science prioritize FDA action against flavorings, protect youth and reduce health disparities.

“My fierce opposition to smoking is a result of smoking killing my dad, and my mom, and my mother-in-law, and second-hand smoking conclusively affecting me. This is not political. This is personal. The protection of kids should be first and foremost,” Enzi said.

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