

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 7, 2005

Senator Mike Enzi
Chairman
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Enzi:

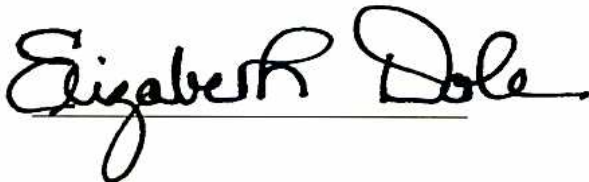
As cosponsors of the Calling for 2-1-1 Act (S. 211), a bill that would provide millions of Americans with access to information on human services and volunteer opportunities, we are writing to request that you hold a mark up on the legislation this September to address any questions or concerns committee members may have. Currently, eight members of your Committee and 33 members of the U.S. Senate as a whole have cosponsored the bill.

In 2000, the Federal Communications Commission assigned 2-1-1 for the purposes of community, volunteer, health and human service information, and referral services. Today, 2-1-1 reaches 138 million Americans, approximately 47 percent of the U.S. population, with call centers operational in 32 states. The goal of S. 211 is to ensure that 100 percent of the U.S. population has access to quality community information and referral services through the 2-1-1 system.

The most critical barrier for communities seeking to implement 2-1-1 is sustainable funding. Current funding where 2-1-1 is operational comes from diverse sources including non-profits, state governments, foundations, and businesses. The federal funding authorized by this legislation would augment, not replace, these funding streams and would help sustain the efforts. In fact, a cost-benefit study by the University of Texas found that if 2-1-1 were available to every American across the country, the service would save citizens \$1.1 billion over ten years.

This legislation is a common-sense measure that has drawn significant bipartisan support and we hope you will favorably consider our request and schedule a mark up in September for The Calling for 2-1-1 Act.

Sincerely,



Allen Fish
(S. 211)

Nora Colonna

Rick Leger

Thompson Jones

Susan Collins

Cyck HABER

Bob F. Bennett