

“Crapo: Rural States Like Idaho Especially Vulnerable to Meth”

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News Release

CRAPO: RURAL STATES LIKE IDAHO ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE TO METH

Idaho meth use among highest in nation

Contact: Susan Wheeler
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Washington, DC – Idaho Senator Mike Crapo today called for an increase in federal resources to stop the flood of illegal methamphetamine crossing U.S. borders and getting to rural states like Idaho. Crapo, during a speech on the Senate floor this week, said a 2006 report by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration documented that Idaho has one of the highest rates of methamphetamine use in residents age 12 and older.

Crapo noted rural states like Idaho have fewer law enforcement and educational resources to fight meth and called for increased funding for federal programs like the Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act (Combat Meth Act).

He noted the fallout of meth use hits innocent victims, even infants. “According to Idaho’s Department of Health and Welfare, the number of children in foster care increased by 40 percent between 2002 and 2006,” Crapo said during his floor speech. “Approximately 3,000 children enter foster care in Idaho every year; the majority of them are children of meth-addicted single mothers. Our children are the unwitting and helpless victims of this menacing drug epidemic. ”

Crapo said he is working with Idaho’s educators to create public service announcements aimed at discouraging meth use. He credits the Montana Meth Project, an awareness campaign from a neighboring rural state, with reducing adult meth use by as much as 70 percent.

Crapo also announced the passage of an amendment that will allow Native American Tribes from Idaho and other states access to new federal funding sources to fight meth. The amendment is part of the Fiscal Year 2008 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Bill. Crapo and his staff have worked with Idaho tribal members about the need for resources to fight meth in large, sparsely-populated areas.

Still, Crapo said law enforcement efforts must be maintained to stem the tide of a drug that is now largely produced south of the U.S. border. He credited efforts by the Mexican government to stop the manufacture of the drug, but noted the enormous profits margins that meth brings will keep the pipelines for the illegal drug growing. He said continued funding for law enforcement efforts, coupled with a strong message to keep children from experimenting with meth, can be key to combating the problem.

“Integral to fighting methamphetamine in our communities is educating our children,” Crapo said. “To that end in Idaho, I’ve partnered with the Idaho Department of Education Safe and Drug Free Schools program and issued a call for high schools across my state to create public service announcements that seek to educate other students about the dangers of methamphetamine abuse, on the model of the highly successful Montana Meth Project. Getting our youth involved directly in this outreach and education effort will reduce the potential for methamphetamine use.”

Crapo concluded, “Considering the growing international methamphetamine epidemic, it’s in our nation’s interest to remain very active in cooperative endeavors such as those in which the State Department, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, and the Department of Homeland Security are currently involved. These successful programs deserve continued funding in order to stop the supply of meth coming into our neighborhoods and Tribal communities.”