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## **Senator Mikulski Sponsors Elder Fall Prevention Act to Address Problems That Cause Senior Citizens to Fall**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-MD) today introduced the Elder Fall Prevention Act, legislation to create a public education campaign directed at seniors to help prevent falls and reduce injury. The legislation also directs two agencies to conduct research on ways to prevent elder falls and improve rehabilitation of elder falls victims. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY) joined Senator Mikulski in introducing this legislation.

"Falls don't discriminate," said Senator Mikulski, ranking Democratic member of the Senate Subcommittee on Aging. "Everyone has a friend or family member who has fallen. This is a serious public health problem that directly affects our seniors and their family members. This legislation provides a framework to reduce and prevent elder falls through public education campaigns and important research."

This legislation authorizes \$38 million for the next three years to do the following:

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### **1. Public Education Campaign**

Federal grant money would be used to establish a three-year awareness campaign for senior citizens, family members, and health care providers to teach them preventative methods for elderly falls.

### **2. Research Initiative**

The legislation directs the Centers for Disease Control and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality to conduct research on things like: identifying seniors who have a high risk of falling; developing better ways of identifying the most effective ways to prevent falls; and improving treatment and rehabilitation of elder falls victims.

### **3. Demonstration Program**

The legislation authorizes federal grants for the National Safety Council and other organizations to conduct demonstration programs on ways to prevent elderly falls.

### **4. Effect on Medicare and Medicaid**

Bill would require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to evaluate the

effect of falls on Medicare and Medicaid and the potential for reducing costs by expanding services. This would include a review of reimbursement policies and if additional fall- related education, prevention, and early intervention services should be covered.

One out of every three adults over 65 falls every year. Falls are the leading cause of injury deaths among persons over 65 and are the leading cause of doctor visits, hospital admissions, and emergency room visits. In 2000, falls among elderly persons accounted for 10,200 deaths and 1.6 million emergency room visits.

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