



Sisters of the Good Shepherd

The National
Advocacy Center

The Honorable Max Baucus
Senate Finance Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Senate Finance Committee
Washington, DC 20510

CC: All Finance Committee Members

July 17, 2007

Dear Senators:

I am writing on behalf the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in support of the reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and to commend the committee for its work to build on the bipartisan legacy of SCHIP. We hope that as the committee marks-up "The Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act" further improvements will be made to ensure that more of America's uninsured children receive needed coverage.

Drawing from the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and from the experience of Good Shepherd Sisters and social service programs throughout the U.S., the National Advocacy Center strongly believes that every person has a basic human right to adequate health care and that society has a responsibility to ensure that everyone has access to health care, to protect the dignity of the human person and ensure the common good. The "Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act" moves our country in the right direction by providing additional funding to cover 3.3 million currently uninsured children and by taking positive steps to improve enrollment. We support these improvements, but believe that the committee can and should make efforts to cover more children and ensure that covered children receive the health care services they need.

To this end we urge you to support the following amendments:

- Kerry/Bingaman #10 – This amendment will provide the full \$50 billion in new SCHIP funding allowed in the FY2008 budget resolution and incentives to enroll half of all currently uninsured children;
- Kerry/Smith/Bingaman/Wyden/Lincoln #1 – This amendment would ensure that mental health parity is guaranteed in SCHIP. The National Advocacy Center also supports the inclusion of dental coverage in SCHIP.
- Kerry/Bingaman #2 – This amendment would give states the option to cover legal immigrant children and pregnant women.

In addition, the National Advocacy Center urges you to oppose efforts to limit participation by parents or by children living in families above 200 percent of the poverty level. One of the key principles for SCHIP reauthorization endorsed by the National Advocacy Center and many other national, state, and local organizations is that no person should lose health insurance coverage as a result of reauthorization.

Since its creation in 1997, SCHIP has, in combination with Medicaid, helped reduce the number of uninsured children by one-third and we appreciate the efforts of the committee to build on this success. The National Advocacy Center stands ready to work with you to pass an SCHIP reauthorization bill that further strengthens our nation's commitment to children's health care.

Sincerely,

Alison L. Prevost, *Lobbyist*