



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

NEWS RELEASE

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR MAX BAUCUS CHILD HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM EXTENSION

We have before us now S. 312, which would extend the availability of unspent Children's Health Insurance Program funds that would otherwise return to the Treasury. The bill before us represents a bicameral, bipartisan compromise. We included an earlier version of this bill in last fall's provider bill.

This year's budget resolution includes a reserve fund to cover the costs of this bill. And this bill falls within the amount specified in that reserve fund. The underlying problem of unspent CHIP funds is largely a timing problem. Funds allotted in the early years of the CHIP program accumulated while states worked through the start-up process and established functioning programs.

Now that state CHIP programs are fully operational and have enrolled more than 5 million children, the programs are threatened with the loss of funding that they need to keep those children enrolled.

I urge my Colleagues to act favorably on this bill and not to amend it. The Budget Committee has advised us that a change in the bill that would affect spending in future fiscal years would create a 60-vote budget point of order against the bill, as it would cause the bill to exceed the funding stream detailed in the budget resolution.

And we must enact this legislation by the end of June, or HHS will impose its own redistribution formula on the states. Any change to the current bill would seriously jeopardize its chances for enactment by the end of the month.

I urge my Colleagues to report this bill favorably. Thank you.

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