



For Immediate Release  
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**Floor Statement of Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.)  
Regarding the State Children's Health Insurance Program**

King David sang: "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!"

When it comes to work here in Congress, the Children's Health Insurance Program has been as close to that ideal as a major piece of legislation can be.

It began 10 years ago with Senators working together, across the political spectrum. Senators Orrin Hatch and Ted Kennedy. Senators John Chafee and Jay Rockefeller. I was proud to have played a part.

It passed overwhelmingly. And the President signed it into law.

And it worked.

CHIP brought people together across political divides, because CHIP was, and always has been, about helping kids. CHIP has been about helping young Americans who, through no fault of their own, live in working families who cannot afford expensive private health insurance. It's about kids. It's about health.

CHIP is about kids going to the doctor. CHIP is about kids having checkups. CHIP is about kids getting vaccinations. CHIP is about kids seeing the dentist.

Healthy children are more likely to go to school. They are more likely to do well in school. They are more likely to get a good job. They are less likely to end up on welfare. They are more likely to become a productive member of the workforce.

CHIP has been a success. Since 1997, the share of all American children without health insurance dropped by a fifth while the number of uninsured adult Americans increased. For our country's poorest children, the uninsured rate has dropped by a third.

Governors from both parties support CHIP. Two Presidents of different parties have supported and expanded CHIP.

This year, we worked together to improve and extend CHIP. Orrin Hatch and Jay Rockefeller, Chuck Grassley and I worked together. We cooperated in the finest tradition of CHIP. I want to thank my Colleagues for the hundreds of hours that they put into that effort.

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Some told me: Put CHIP in reconciliation. Some said: Use the fast-track budget process to pass CHIP, so that you don't have to get big majorities to get it done. But I said "No." CHIP has always been a consensus bill. We would make CHIP a consensus bill again this year.

And we did. The Finance Committee reported the CHIP bill out by a vote of 17 to four. The Senate passed it by a vote of 68 to 31. And this evening, the House of Representatives will pass essentially the same CHIP bill.

Now it is time for us to pass this bill and send it to the President.

And when we do, it will be time for the President to show that he is a uniter, and not a divider. It will be time for the President to act in the best traditions of compassionate conservatism. It will be time for the President to sign this bill.

Let us show how good and pleasant it can be for Washington to work together in unity. Let us help get health care to kids who need it. And let us enact this CHIP bill into law.

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