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### **Hatch Opening Statement at KIDS Act Markup**

**WASHINGTON** – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) today delivered the following opening statement at a markup of S. 1827, the *Keep Kids’ Insurance Dependable and Secure (KIDS) Act of 2017*. The *KIDS Act* extends funding for the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for five years and over time, transitions CHIP to its traditional federal-state partnership, and provides additional protections for low-income children and flexibility for states.

*This bipartisan legislation would extend funding for the Children’s Health Insurance Program for five years. It would also gradually transition CHIP to its traditional federal-state partnership, allow greater state flexibility, and provide more protections for children in low-income families.*

*I am very pleased to have been able to work with Senator Wyden on this important legislation and I am grateful for his help in putting this bill together.*

*Twenty years ago, Senator Ted Kennedy and I worked together to create the CHIP program to provide health coverage for children in vulnerable families who could not afford private insurance, but still didn’t qualify for assistance through Medicaid.*

*Drafting the legislation took months of negotiations and compromise. In the end, neither of us got everything we wanted, but, we were both pleased with the result. And, to this day, I remain proud of what we were able to accomplish with CHIP and believe that it is a prime example of what government can accomplish when both parties work together.*

*Throughout most of its history, CHIP has enjoyed bipartisan support throughout the country. As I said in our hearing last month, it isn’t perfect and I’m not wholly supportive of some of the subsequent changes to the program, but most people still consider it to be a success.*

*That success will continue once we pass the KIDS Act.*

*As we know, federal CHIP funding expired last week. And while states and D.C. have funding leftover to help them get into FY18, it is still paramount that we act quickly both here in committee and through the next steps in the process to ensure eligible children do not go uninsured once federal funding is exhausted.*

*Once again, I want to thank Senator Wyden and all of our colleagues who have worked with us on this legislation. I also want to thank all the state officials that have provided their input on the program over the years.*

*I expect we'll get a strong bipartisan vote out of committee. And I appreciate all of my colleagues' willingness to support this important effort.*

*Before I conclude my remarks, I know a number of our colleagues are concerned about the health care extenders. Those matters, until recently, had been swallowed up in the broader healthcare debate.*

*Once we are able to move this CHIP extension through committee, passage of the Medicare and Medicaid extenders will become my top healthcare priority. I know that Senator Wyden is similarly committed to getting this done.*

*For those feeling some anxiety over the delays on the extenders, please keep in mind the committee has, in the past, retroactively extended Medicare and Medicaid provisions after they've expired. We have been able – on a bipartisan basis – to act later in the calendar year to make states and healthcare providers whole.*

*We will get that done in short order. Once again, I am committed to seeing it through.*

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