



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Wyden Statement at Finance Committee Markup of the KIDS Act**  
*As Prepared for Delivery*

The Finance Committee is here today on a matter of urgent business. Over the weekend, Congress missed its deadline to secure funding for nearly 9 million kids who rely on the Children’s Health Insurance Program, or CHIP. Today the committee will be voting on a strong, bipartisan bill to extend CHIP funding for five years, maintaining the promise of affordable health care for vulnerable children across the country.

There’s still a ways to go until this bill can reach the president’s desk, but states can’t wait much longer. While Congress took a dangerous detour away from working to protect the health of our children during the month of September, states had to prepare for a world without CHIP. That means a whole host of steps that put kids health care at risk – enrollment freezes, belt-tightening, and other emergency measures that states will have to take to preserve care for children already enrolled in CHIP if Congress doesn’t act soon. Every day the Congress doesn’t act brings another article or local editorial about how we aren’t doing right by America’s kids.

This delay is going to mean real heartache for parents, too. About a month ago when the Finance Committee had a hearing to discuss CHIP, a mother described how she wouldn’t be able to afford prescriptions without the affordable care CHIP offers. That’s just one example of what families across the country are contending with when they read headlines about how Congress failed to fund CHIP on time.

So let’s act decisively and quickly to move this strong, bipartisan policy forward. The longer Congress waits, the worse it’s going to get. But I’m confident that on this issue in particular, kids’ health care, this Committee and the entire Congress can come together and get something done soon.

Before I wrap up, I want to say a few words about the other health care priorities that need to be acted on this year. I am committed to working with members on both sides of the aisle and Chairman Hatch to make sure these are also dealt with as soon as possible. For today, let’s send a clear message that the Finance Committee is serious about kids’ health, and serious about giving CHIP the funding it needs so families can thrive and states can have certainty for years to come.

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