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MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors
Re: President's remarks on SCHIP
Da: Thursday, Sept. 20, 2007

Sen. Chuck Grassley, ranking member of the Committee on Finance, today made the following comments in response to the President's news conference remarks on the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

"I'm disappointed by the President's comments. Drawing lines in the sand at this stage isn't constructive. I'm working to negotiate a good compromise bill that will have broad bipartisan support. I hope that after we get a deal, the President will review it and reconsider his position.

"A long-term extension of current law leaves a lot of kids without coverage, leaves adults covered in a program for children, and could lead to more waivers to cover adults and other things the White House and many Republicans oppose. I talked to the President this morning. I pointed out that his limit of \$5 billion over five years isn't enough to accomplish what he said he wants to do, and that's cover more kids. I also pointed out that the \$35 billion compromise package that I've helped to negotiate is \$15 billion less than what many Democrats in Congress wanted. The landmark bipartisan tax relief plans required some give on the part of congressional Democrats and Republicans and the White House. The same is true here. The White House must recognize that bipartisan compromise is necessary with the SCHIP package being negotiated.

"I'm also disappointed that the President is getting bad information about what the compromise bill would do. It wouldn't allow for coverage of children in households with \$83,000 incomes. In making that statement, the President was referring to the SCHIP expansion proposed by New York that the Administration recently denied. The President and I agree on a lot of principles for increasing health insurance coverage. I wish he'd engage Congress in a bill that he could sign instead of threatening a veto, and I hope he'll still do that."