



815 SIXTEENTH STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006

JOHN J. SWEENEY
PRESIDENT

RICHARD L. TRUMKA
SECRETARY-TREASURER

LINDA CHAVEZ-THOMPSON
EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT

LEGISLATIVE ALERT!

(202) 637-5090



September 24, 2007

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I am writing in support of the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007 (HR 976). This legislation would significantly reduce the number of uninsured children in this country, thereby ensuring that millions of low-income children get the health care they need.

Since the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) was enacted in 1997 with broad bipartisan backing, the number of uninsured children has dropped by one third. But the erosion of employer-sponsored benefits has caught up with children. Since 2000, the share of Americans with employer-sponsored health insurance has dropped 7 percent, and the number of uninsured children has grown by one million in just the last two years.

The CHIP reauthorization bill before the House continues the program's tradition of bipartisan support. CHIP has proven highly effective in reaching low-income children who would not otherwise have health insurance coverage, and this bill renews the program's commitment to the more than 6 million children already enrolled, while extending coverage to another 4 million uninsured children.

H.R. 976 would provide \$35 billion in new funding over 5 years, which is well targeted to extend health coverage to millions of the lowest-income children who now have no health insurance. The CHIP reauthorization bill would also make other improvements to the program, including better access to dental and mental health services. It would replace a punitive and restrictive administration policy letter to states with a more thoughtful approach that preserves state flexibility, which has been an essential part of CHIP since the program began a decade ago.

CHIP is a proven program that has succeeded in significantly reducing the number of uninsured children in this country. Now is the time to build on that success to reach millions of uninsured children. We urge your support for the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act and thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

William Samuel, Director
DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATION