



**Council of the
Great City Schools**

Albuquerque
Anchorage
Atlanta
Austin
Baltimore
Birmingham
Boston
Broward County
Buffalo
Charleston
Charlotte-Mecklenburg
Chicago
Christina (DE)
Cincinnati
Clark County
Cleveland
Columbus
Dallas
Dayton
Denver
Des Moines
Detroit
East Baton Rouge
Fort Worth
Fresno
Greensboro
Hillsborough County
Houston
Indianapolis
Jackson
Jacksonville
Kansas City (MO)
Long Beach
Los Angeles
Louisville
Memphis
Miami-Dade County
Milwaukee
Minneapolis
Nashville
New Orleans
New York City
Newark
Norfolk
Oakland
Oklahoma City
Omaha
Orlando
Palm Beach County
Philadelphia
Pittsburgh
Portland
Providence
Richmond
Rochester
Sacramento
Salt Lake City
San Diego
San Francisco
Seattle
Shreveport
St. Louis
St. Paul
Toledo
Washington, D.C.
Wichita
♦

September 25, 2007

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Representative:

The Council of the Great City Schools, the coalition of the nation's largest central city school districts, writes to urge a YES vote on the conference report for the Children's Health Insurance Reauthorization Act, H.R. 976. Passage of this measure is essential to prevent the expiration of the current health coverage for some 6.5 million low-income children whose parents do not qualify for Medicaid and cannot afford private insurance. The conference agreement is also expected to cover nearly 4 million additional children that are uninsured.

The legislation will ensure that low-income children will receive appropriate mental health and dental care, in addition to essential medical assistance. The expansion of outreach initiatives and the streamlining of eligibility determinations, including presumptive eligibility and express lane determinations based on eligibility for other federal programs, will facilitate enrollment of eligible children and the expeditious provision of health services.

Since the Great City Schools serve communities with the highest concentrations of poverty in the nation, it is critically important that our children come to school healthy and ready to learn. In fact, the school setting provides an optimal location for meeting the medical and other health-related needs of school children, who are required by law to be in daily attendance.

The Council is particularly supportive of an important provision of the conference agreement (section 616) preventing the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) from administratively slashing Medicaid reimbursements to schools by some 20% to 50% without Congressional approval. Without this short-term moratorium in H.R. 976 prohibiting these administrative actions by HHS, new proposed regulations would have made current medical assistance for eligible school children – most of whom are students with disabilities – unallowable and non-reimbursable.

The Council of the Great City Schools, therefore, urges an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote adopting the conference report on the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act.

Sincerely,

Michael Casserly
Executive Director