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ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20515-6115

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September 25, 2007

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Support Children, Support H.R. 976

Dear Colleague:

It's time to vote for America's children and pass H.R. 976, to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The bipartisan and bicameral agreement to reauthorize CHIP is the most significant investment in children's health since passage of the original program in 1997. There can be no further delays as the program will expire this Sunday, September 30.

The bill will invest an additional \$35 billion over 5 years to strengthen CHIP's financing, increase health insurance coverage for low-income children, and improve the quality of health care children receive. It is designed to target the lowest-income uninsured children and provides special incentives for States to find and enroll those children eligible but still not enrolled.

Specifically, coverage is maintained and improved for the six million children currently enrolled and allows States to cover four million additional children who are eligible but still not enrolled. For the price of 1 Starbucks Frappuccino a day, each of the 10 million children covered under CHIP will have health care from a choice of private health insurance plans or doctors that ensures they receive better quality care such as vaccinations, well child visits, treatment for serious diseases such as cancer or autism, and much more.

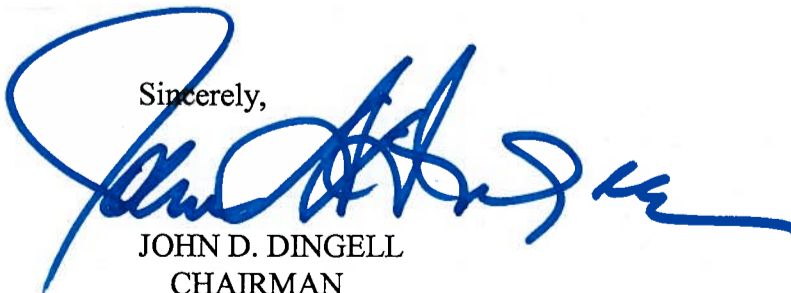
The bipartisan agreement reforms and improves the CHIP funding formula to provide States yearly allotments that cover their currently enrolled low-income children while providing bonus payments and outreach grants to assist in finding other children who are eligible but still uninsured.

In addition, H.R. 976 shores up dental and mental health benefits in the CHIP program. This is especially important because tooth decay is the most common chronic disease of childhood, and left untreated has cause severe illness and even death, and because 1-in-10 children suffer serious mental health problems.

This bill promotes better preventive care that will not only help stave off future, more serious illnesses, but also reduces the costs of treating those more serious conditions. Prenatal care for low-income pregnant women is included as well because of its crucial importance to health outcomes for newborns and children.

Nine million children in this country have no health insurance. We must reauthorize CHIP now to address this problem. I urge you to vote for H.R. 976.

Sincerely,



JOHN D. DINGELL
CHAIRMAN