

September 25, 2007

Member
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: *State Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007 - Conference Report (H.R. 976)*

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 95,000 school board members who serve our nation's 48 million students in local public school districts, the National School Boards Association (NSBA) would like to express our support for the *State Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007* conference report and urges you to vote in favor of this important legislation.

As you know, good health is essential for students in order for them to learn and achieve in school. Multiple studies have shown that students who receive health services have reduced rates of absenteeism, reduced drop-out rates, higher grade point averages, and higher graduation rates. In order for children to be healthy, however, they must have access to affordable health care.

Over the last ten years, Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) have made tremendous progress in improving children's health insurance, currently providing coverage to over 30 million children. However, more than 9 million children in America are still uninsured and millions more are underinsured. As a result, a significant majority (63 percent) of registered voters favor expanding the program by \$35 billion over five years, according to a recent poll by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Congress has a historic opportunity with the reauthorization of SCHIP to take the necessary next step in providing health insurance to millions of children so that they may realize their full potential both in school and life. H.R. 976 will expand outreach initiatives and streamline eligibility determinations to help facilitate enrollment of eligible children and provide them with the health services they need. Furthermore, it will ensure that low-income children receive appropriate mental health and dental care, in addition to essential medical assistance.

NSBA is particularly supportive of the provision (Sec. 616) in the conference report that prevents the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services from restricting Medicaid reimbursement for school-based services until May 28, 2008. Without this short-term moratorium, a newly proposed rule to eliminate federal matching funds for administrative activities (such as Medicaid outreach, program planning, referral and monitoring) performed by school personnel, as well as certain types of transportation services for students with disabilities would limit schools' ability to identify Medicaid eligible children and connect them to needed services in their schools and communities.



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- *Michael A. Resnick
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Reauthorization of SCHIP offers Congress a historic opportunity to come together – on a bipartisan basis for our nation’s children – to build on SCHIP and Medicaid’s remarkable successes. We urge Congress to pass this important legislation with a veto-proof majority and to send a clear message that Americans of all communities believe in a strong health care system for children.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Resnick
Associate Executive Director

MAR: cg/kc