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July 26, 2007

The Honorable John Dingell  
Chairman, Energy and Commerce Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Rangel  
Chairman, Ways and Means Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Dingell and Rangel:

On behalf of the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) and our public and private member agencies across the country who work directly with abused, neglected, and otherwise troubled children, youth, and their families, I write to express our gratitude for your committees' work and introduction of the Children's Health and Medicare Protection (CHAMP) Act, H.R. 3162.

For the past ten years, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) has served as Medicaid's essential companion in providing children involved with the child welfare system the accessible, affordable, and quality healthcare they need and deserve. Having helped reduce the number of children living without health insurance by more than one third, there is no doubt that CHIP has brightened children's futures—especially those in low-income families who do not have access to or cannot afford employer-sponsored coverage.

By helping to introduce a comprehensive reauthorization bill, you have shown your commitment to keeping CHIP's momentum and progress moving forward. Providing \$50 billion over five years in additional funding towards the program is an essential and laudable element of the CHAMP Act, as it would provide coverage to millions of children who are currently eligible but not enrolled. The population of children that CWLA serves and children everywhere would also benefit greatly from bill's guaranteed access to dental coverage; access to mental health services as a result of parity; state options to engage in sensible and fair practices such as covering older adolescents up to age 24, pregnant women, and legal immigrant children and pregnant women; performance bonuses to states who successfully reach out and enroll eligible low-income children; and establishment of the independent Children's Access, Payment and Equality (CAPE) Commission that would monitor and help ensure children's access to care and services under CHIP and Medicaid.

The CHAMP Act certainly makes children and their health a national priority and we look forward to working with you to pass this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Spears". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Linda Spears  
Acting Vice President for Operations and  
Vice President, Corporate Communications and Development