



September 25, 2007

The Honorable John Dingell
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of Congress:

On behalf of Families USA, the national voice of health care consumers, we applaud you for your efforts to ensure that more children get access to quality, affordable health insurance. Reauthorizing the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) is one of the most important tasks before Congress this year. The Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007, HR 976, builds upon the success of the SCHIP program and will ensure that more children get access to the medical care that they need.

The legislation adds \$35 billion to the program over the next five years to cover approximately 10 million children. This increase in funding is essential for states to reach more of the six million uninsured children currently eligible for Medicaid and SCHIP.

Your bipartisan efforts will strengthen the program by giving states more money to cover eligible children and improving the ability of states to find and enroll these children. The bill strengthens the safety net SCHIP and Medicaid provide for children. It improves the CHIP benefit package by guaranteeing dental health and mental health benefits. Moreover, the bill gives states the option to extend coverage to pregnant women who are now unfairly prohibited from participating.

This bill represents a historic, bipartisan compromise to reach out to the growing number of low-income, uninsured children in this country and ensure that they get access to the healthy start they deserve. We thank you for your strong commitment to children's health coverage and look forward to working with you to pass a strong SCHIP reauthorization bill that continues our nation's commitment to children's health care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Pollack".

Ronald F. Pollack
Executive Director