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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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March 12, 2007

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**AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE OPTIONS FOR CHILDREN
COSPONSOR THE CHILDREN'S HEALTH FIRST ACT**

Dear Colleague:

Today, nine million children, or 12 percent of all the children in the United States, lack health coverage. This is in spite of the fact that the short-term investment in children's health pays off in long-term results.

Children are inexpensive to insure. It only costs about \$3.50 a day, or less than the price of a frappuccino from Starbucks, to provide a child with good insurance coverage. For the cost of one MRI machine, we could insure 1,640 children for a full year.

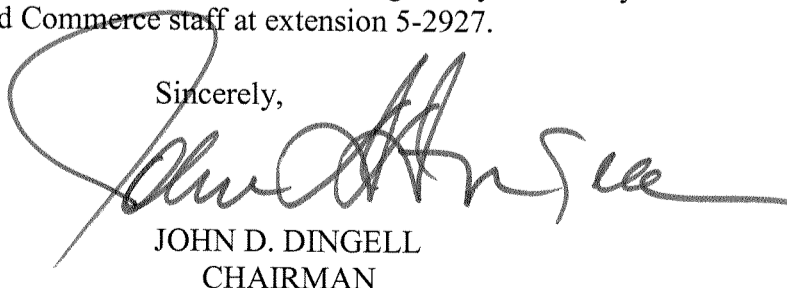
That is why I am introducing the Children's Health First Act. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton will be introducing a companion bill in the Senate. This legislation would provide affordable health care options for families to cover their children. It would provide States with the incentives and resources to expand existing State coverage to children in families with incomes up to 400 percent of the Federal poverty level (approximately \$70,000 for a family of three). The Children's Health First Act would give States the tools and resources to find and enroll the six million children who qualify for health coverage today, but are not enrolled.

The Children's Health First Act would provide incentives to shore up employer-sponsored coverage that more than half of all U.S. children enjoy today. Both families and employers would have a new affordable coverage option. They could buy in to coverage that has proven to be more efficient and less expensive than other avenues such as the individual market. States that choose to insure children in families with incomes up to 400 percent of the Federal poverty level would also be permitted to subsidize up to 50 percent of the cost of covering the child in employer-sponsored coverage.

This legislation would also provide new coverage avenues. For example, States would be allowed to extend coverage to older children. One of the biggest problems older children face is the lack of healthcare coverage as they age out of Medicaid and SCHIP. This legislation would permit States to cover young adults through age 25. It would also provide new incentives to provide affordable coverage to pregnant women, consistent with children's coverage levels.

I invite you to join me in cosponsoring this important legislation. To be an original cosponsor, please e-mail Christie Houlihan (Christie.Houlihan@mail.house.gov) of the Committee on Energy and Commerce staff at by **12:00 noon Wednesday, March 14, 2007**. If you have additional questions, contact Bridgett Taylor or Amy Hall of the Committee on Energy and Commerce staff at extension 5-2927.

Sincerely,



JOHN D. DINGELL
CHAIRMAN