



Gerald W. McEntee
President

William Lucy
Secretary-Treasurer

Vice Presidents

Donald C. Alexander
Westerville, OH

Ken Allen
Portland, OR

Henry L. Bayer
Chicago, IL

George Boncoraglio
New York, NY

Anthony Caso
Boston, MA

Greg Devereux
Olympia, WA

Danny Donohue
Albany, NY

David R. Fillman
Harrisburg, PA

Michael Fox
Harrisburg, PA

Albert Garrett
Detroit, MI

Raglan George Jr.
New York, NY

Alicia Goff
Los Angeles, CA

Sherryl Gordon
Trenton, NJ

Danny J. Homan
Des Moines, IA

Salvatore Luciano
New Britain, CT

Roberto Lynch
Chicago, IL

Donald S. Middleton Sr.
Baltimore, MD

Patricia A. Moss
Washington, OH

Michael D. Murphy
Madison, WI

Henry Nicholas
Philadelphia, PA

Russell K. Okata
Honolulu, HI

Ellie Ortiz López
San Juan, PR

George E. Popyack
Oakland, CA

Greg Powell
Austin, TX

Jean H. Reed
New York, NY

Eddie Rodriguez
New York, NY

Joseph P. Rugola
Columbus, OH

Kathy J. Sackman
Pomona, CA

Eliot Seide
South St. Paul, MN

Mary E. Sullivan
Albany, NY

David Warrick
Indianapolis, IN

Jeanette D. Wynn
Tallahassee, FL

July 25, 2007

Members of the Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20015

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 1.4 million members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), I am writing to express our strong support for the Children's Health and Medicare Protection (CHAMP) Act (H.R. 3162). We urge you to support this legislation when the Energy and Commerce Committee considers it today.

This bill addresses one of the nation's most urgent tasks, to provide health coverage to millions of children who are without this basic need. H.R. 3162 would extend coverage to a substantial portion of the children who are eligible for coverage under Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), but who are not enrolled. The bill also makes important improvements in the quality of coverage by adding dental benefits and parity for mental health coverage. The optional coverage of older children, legal immigrants and certain pregnant women are necessary and sensible additions to CHIP. We agree with the sponsors of the legislation that an increase in the tobacco tax is an appropriate source of revenue to help pay for increasing health coverage for children.

AFSCME also strongly supports elements of the bill aimed at improving and strengthening the Medicare program, including increased assistance to low-income beneficiaries, improvements in benefits and the physician payment update. We also strongly support the phasing out of subsidies to the Medicare Advantage plans. It is vital to the future financial stability of Medicare that these payments be phased out. If these overpayments are not addressed, Medicare beneficiaries will be faced with significant cuts in benefits and increased cost sharing in the very near future.

AFSCME supports the dedication of a portion of the Medicare Advantage savings and an increase in the tobacco tax to pay for improvements to CHIP.

We strongly urge you to approve the CHAMP Act today.

Sincerely,

Charles M. Loveless
Director of Legislation

CML:cbb