



American Dental Association
www.ada.org

March 28, 2007

The Honorable John Dingell
Chairman
Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dingell:

On behalf of the 153,000 members of the American Dental Association (ADA), we thank you for introducing HR 1781, the Children's Dental Health Improvement Act of 2007. The recent tragic death of 12-year old Deamonte Driver of Maryland from a severe brain infection, which may have resulted from a deplorable degree of untreated dental disease, underscores the urgency for passage of this legislation.

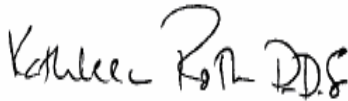
It is a national disgrace that in 21st Century America millions of children don't have access to basic preventive and restorative dental care. Thousands of these kids suffer from profound dental disease -- they can't eat or sleep properly, and they can't pay attention in school because they're suffering from chronic infections and the resulting constant pain that could have been prevented and easily relieved through treatment.

It's time for action to prevent the next child's needless death; to end society's neglect of the oral health of the most vulnerable among us. Dentists can lead the way, but we can't do this alone. We need state and federal public officials to stop shortchanging dental programs, which costs all of us heavily in the long run. HR 1781 includes grants to states that develop plans to improve dental service delivery and to facilities and individual dentists who care for the underserved populations. The bill also authorizes funding for demonstration projects to increase access to pediatric dental services in underserved areas and provides for an oral health initiative that includes the establishment of chief dental officers in key federal agencies. It facilitates dental sealant programs in schools and oral health education. Finally, HR 1781 establishes a much-needed federal guarantee for dental coverage for children covered by SCHIP that will serve to stabilize access to dental care.

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The ADA has worked with you since you initially introduced the Children's Dental Health Improvement Act in 2004 and we are pleased to continue our support for this important legislation. The Children's Dental Health Improvement Act is a necessary and important vehicle for improving oral health care access for underserved populations in America and for stimulating additional solutions to this ongoing problem.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Kathleen Roth, D.D.S.

Kathleen Roth, D.D.S.
President

Handwritten signature of James B. Bramson, D.D.S.

James B. Bramson, D.D.S.
Executive Director

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