

October 15, 2007

Representative Jeff Fortenberry
1517 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Lee Terry
1524 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Adrian Smith
503 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Fortenberry, Terry, and Smith;

There are 45,000 reasons why we, the undersigned organizations, are asking you to override the President's veto of the State Children's Health Insurance Program compromise bill. These reasons represent the number of uninsured children in our state that will remain without access to health coverage unless significant investments are made in the program. You have been given a second chance to do the right thing and vote in favor of this bipartisan legislation. We urge you to vote in support of SCHIP on behalf of the thousands of uninsured children in Nebraska who will gain coverage under this bill.

Vetoed by the President on October 3rd, the SCHIP bill before Congress is a product of strong bipartisan compromise that has attained broad support from both Republicans and Democrats. Since its creation in a GOP controlled Congress in 1997, SCHIP has proven incredibly successful at providing health coverage to children in working families who do not earn enough to keep pace with the skyrocketing price of health insurance in the private market. Thanks to SCHIP, over 44,000 Nebraska children had health coverage in 2006. However, there are 45,000 more kids in our state that remain uninsured. A vote to override the President's veto will ensure that no Nebraska children will lose their health care coverage under SCHIP and that more children have access to much needed medical services.

We believe that this bill is consistent with the original intent of the program, to provide coverage for those children who fall into the gap between Medicaid and affordable private coverage. This bill creates disincentives for states choosing to extend coverage to middle and upper income families. This bill phases adults out of the program and puts the lowest income children first in line for coverage. It is a fiscally and morally responsible effort to improve the quality of life of our most vulnerable children.

We the undersigned organizations represent a diverse group of child advocates dedicated to the health of children in our state and in our country. On October 18th, we urge you to vote in support of SCHIP and the millions of working families who depend on the program to provide health care to their children. Please take this second chance to stand with our children and override the President's veto

Sincerely,

AARP Nebraska
American Lung Association of the Central States
Association of Nebraska Community Action Agencies
Board of Christian Social Witness of the United Methodist Church
Center for Rural Affairs
Catholic Charities Omaha
CASA for Lancaster County
Children and Family Coalition of Nebraska
Center for People in Need
Child Saving Institute
Children and the Poor Committee of the Nebraska Conference of the United Methodist Church
Easter Seals Nebraska
Family Resource Council
Father Flanagan's Boys' Home
Human Services Federation
Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska
Lincoln Action Program
NAPE/AFSCME 61
Nebraska Advocacy Services
Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest
Nebraska Association of Homes and Services to Children
Nebraska CASA Association
Nebraska Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Nebraska Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers
Nebraska Hospital Association
Nebraska Medical Association
Nebraska Nurses Association
Nebraska School Nurses Association
Nebraska State AFL-CIO
Nebraska State Education Association
OneWorld Community Health Centers, Inc.
Parents Forever/Kids Talk About Divorce
Public Health Association of Nebraska
The Arc of Nebraska
S.A.F.E. Center
Uta Halee Girls Village and Cooper Village
Visinet, Inc.
Voices for Children in Nebraska
Western Community Health Resources
YWCA Lincoln
YWCA Omaha