



THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI  
GOVERNOR

August 29, 2007

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
528 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
361A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-1702

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
H234 United States Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John A. Boehner  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
1011 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-3508

Dear Senator Reid, Senator McConnell, Speaker Pelosi and Representative Boehner:

I write to urge you to lead Congress, as soon as possible, to pass a reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) that reconciles the differences between the House and Senate versions of the program and that rescinds the August 17, 2007, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) letter. Any delay in the passage of this important legislation or failure to overturn the CMS announcement will unduly affect the well-being of our youngest and most vulnerable citizens: our children.

The authorization for this critical safety net program will expire at the end of next month. For many reasons, delaying a reconciliation of the House and Senate bills and defaulting to a series of temporary extensions of the program is untenable for the millions of children who rely upon the program.

In addition, failure to overturn the recent CMS announcement will fundamentally undermine the flexibility the program has given to states under SCHIP to craft and operate health care programs that best serve their children.

Released under the guise of preventing SCHIP from substituting for private insurance, this announcement was unexpected as this flexibility has been repeatedly endorsed by this Administration as it granted permission to multiple states to expand their coverage options beyond the 250 percent Federal Poverty Level.

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In Oregon, these new rules put up unfair barriers that will prevent tens of thousands of Oregon children from purchasing subsidized private health care coverage. When both families and states are willing to do their fair share to protect our children, it is indefensible that the federal government would attempt to back out of the deal.

America is the richest nation in the world, and in Oregon we believe that means we have a responsibility to make sure no child is left without the health care they need.

I look forward to working with you to ensure that a sensible bipartisan SCHIP reauthorization can be signed into law in a timely and certain manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Theodore R. Kulongoski". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T".

THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI  
Governor

TRK:sb:jyk  
c: Sarah Bittleman, Oregon Director of Federal Affairs  
Oregon Congressional Delegation