



August 2, 2007

VIA FAX

United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

The United Steelworkers union (USW), on behalf of our 850,000 members, is calling on congressional leaders to improve health coverage for children through reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

The Children's Health Insurance Reauthorization Act of 2007, which the Senate Finance Committee passed with bipartisan support, would provide \$35 billion in new funding over five years to extend coverage to millions of the lowest-income children without health insurance.

Since its inception in 1997, SCHIP has been an important health care safety net for low income children in this country and has made significant strides in reducing the number of uninsured children. If SCHIP is forced to operate under the Administration's proposed \$5 billion increase over the next five years, the Congressional Budget Office estimates the program will cut as many as 100,000 children from the rolls because of rising health care costs.

We are also asking you to oppose any weakening amendments aimed at reducing the Finance Committee's increased commitment for funding and expanding SCHIP coverage. We understand Senators McConnell and Lott plan to offer an amendment to do both.

In addition, a proven program like SCHIP should not be burdened with other amendments that would make coverage less affordable for low-income families such as small business health plans and Health Savings Accounts. Attempts to replace current tax benefits for employer-sponsored coverage with tax credits should also be rejected. The employer-sponsored health care

United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union

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system, despite its drawbacks, provides coverage for two out of three Americans.

The USW urges your strong support for the Children's Health Insurance Reauthorization Act of 2007.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Holly R. Hart". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Holly R. Hart
Legislative Director

HRH/ctl