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Taking Action to End Poverty

PRESS RELEASE

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House SCHIP Bill Would Triple Illinois Health Funding

The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) Reauthorization Act, passed in the U.S. House of Representatives yesterday by an overwhelming bi-partisan majority vote of 265 to 159, would triple the amount of federal funds for healthcare that Illinois currently receives. Nationwide, four million uninsured children would gain access to health insurance.

Under the House bill, Illinois stands to receive \$703 million dollars for the federal fiscal year that starts October 1, 2007, up from \$224 million under the current law, according to analysis by the federal government's Congressional Research Service and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

"This very substantial increase is extremely important to Illinois," said John Bouman, President of The Sargent Shriver National Center On Poverty Law. "It will allow Illinois to sustain its current effort to insure all Illinois children and use scarce state healthcare funds for other pressing health needs."

The bill, a bipartisan compromise between earlier House and Senate versions, now goes to the Senate, where it is likely to pass later this week with strong bipartisan support. However, President Bush has promised to veto the bill. While there is more than enough support in the Senate to override the veto with the necessary 2/3 votes, the required 290-vote override in the House is unlikely.

Of the Illinois House members, Republicans LaHood and Kirk and all ten Democrats voted in favor of the SCHIP bill, and seven Republicans voted against it. Bouman calls on the seven Illinois representatives who voted against the SCHIP Bill—Representatives Biggert, Hastert, Johnson, Manzullo, Roskam, Shimkus and Weller—to follow the strong lead of Rep. LaHood, who actively attempted to rally Republicans to vote for the bill. Bouman asks these representatives to reconsider and vote in favor of overriding the President's certain vote. "Ninety percent of the American public believes all children should be covered, and this bill is a major step in that direction," Bouman said.

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The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, a national resource, champions law and policy promoting equal opportunity and support for low-income individuals, families, and communities so that they can escape poverty permanently.