

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Crapo
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank Pallone
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker McCarthy, Minority Leader Jeffries, Chairman Wyden, Ranking Member Crapo, Chairman McMorris Rodgers, and Ranking Member Pallone:

Stable access to affordable and comprehensive health care is essential for the well-being and future success of our nation's children. Yet, the health care coverage of over 7 million children is not secure because the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) is not permanent. As leading national, state, tribal, and local organizations concerned about the health and well-being of America's children, we urge you to pass a permanent extension of CHIP through the Children's Health Insurance Program Permanency (CHIPP) Act (H.R.4771).

The CHIPP Act would take the long overdue step of making CHIP permanent and placing it on par with other federal public health insurance programs. Most importantly, the CHIPP Act secures access to quality, affordable health care coverage for millions of the nation's children, offering families stability and peace of mind while eliminating the fear and anxiety that arises with temporary funding extensions and the threat of the program's discontinuation.

Since its enactment, CHIP has been an essential source of children's health care coverage. It ensures access to high-quality, affordable, pediatric-appropriate health care for children in working families whose parents earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but, for whom, private insurance is unavailable or too expensive. CHIP's impact on improving children's health outcomes, ensuring equitable access to health care, and providing financial security to families cannot be overstated. For over 25 years, CHIP has helped:

- **Reduce the number of uninsured children:** CHIP, in tandem with Medicaid, has reduced the number of uninsured children by more than 68 percent, from an uninsurance rate of nearly 15 percent in 1997 to less than five percent in 2016.
- **Safeguard children's health:** CHIP is vital for children in households with low incomes that do not have Medicaid access. It provides crucial healthcare services like preventive care, vaccinations, dental, vision care, and other necessary treatments.
- **Promote prevention and early intervention:** CHIP has been a crucial driver in promoting preventive care and early intervention for children's health issues. Regular check-ups, vaccinations, screenings, and early identification of developmental delays or chronic conditions are pivotal for addressing health concerns before they become more severe and costly to treat.
- **Reduce health disparities:** In 2021 more than half of Native American, Black, multi-racial, and Latino children relied on Medicaid and CHIP as their source of health coverage. Children from these historically excluded communities face significant health disparities and CHIP has been instrumental in narrowing these gaps by providing quality, comprehensive, and affordable coverage to these populations.
- **Promote academic success and overall well-being:** CHIP's comprehensive health coverage, which includes both physical and behavioral health, promotes academic success. Healthy kids attend school regularly, participate actively, and reach their full potential.
- **Relieve financial burden on families:** One of the greatest benefits of CHIP is its ability to alleviate the financial strain on families with limited resources. By providing affordable health care coverage, CHIP allows parents to prioritize their children's health without sacrificing other essential needs.

Despite its importance for children and their families, Congress has failed, as a body, to prioritize CHIP's permanence. Instead, CHIP has faced repeated threats throughout its history, including being held hostage in recent funding cycles for policies having nothing to do with children; being vetoed twice; and even going unfunded for four months.

Although the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, extended CHIP for an additional two years, the program remains the only federal health care coverage program that is not permanent. Medicare, Medicaid, TRICARE, and the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program (FEHBP) are not subject to periodic reauthorization like CHIP. Waiting to make CHIP permanent any longer will only increase costs and threaten the program's future. It also inhibits the ability of states to further improve upon CHIP in ways that are tailored to better serve children locally.

Congress can put an end to the recurrent funding dilemma that stands in the way of securing millions of children's access to critical, life-saving coverage and care. We urge you to prioritize

the health and well-being of the nation's children by taking bold action to pass the CHIPP Act during the 118th Congress.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss the contents of this letter further, please contact Abuko D. Estrada, J.D., Vice President for Medicaid and Child Health Policy, at abukoe@firstfocus.org and Abbie Malloy, Director for Health, Environmental, and Nutrition Policy, at abbiem@firstfocus.org.

Respectfully,

National Organizations

AASA, The School Superintendents Association
Academic Pediatric Association
AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families
Allergy and Asthma Network
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association on Health and Disability
American Dental Association
American Federation of Teachers
American Pediatric Society
Association for Community Affiliated Plans
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Brightpoint
Caring Across Generations
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Center for Law and Social Policy
Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP)
Children's Advocacy Institute
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Rights
Coalition on Human Needs
Community Catalyst
Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa Peace and Justice Office
ELCA
Families USA
Family Centered Treatment Foundation
Family Voices
Green & Health Homes Initiative, Inc.
Health Care Voices
Healthy Teen Network
HEAR US Inc.
Hemophilia Federation of America
HRA Council

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)
Lakeshore Foundation
Leading for Kids
Legal Action Center
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
Mason Consulting LLC
Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP Services Dental Association
MomsRising
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Association of School Nurses
National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment (National PLACE)
National Center on Adoption and Permanency
National Council of Jewish Women
National Diaper Bank Network
National Disability Rights Network
National Family Support Network
National Health Law Program
National Juvenile Justice Network
National Organization for Women
Network Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
NYU Law School
Pediatric Policy Council
Prevent Blindness
Primary Care Development Corporation
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
School-Based Health Alliance
Sisters of Charity, BVM
Society for Pediatric Research
SocioEnergetics Foundation
Spina Bifida Association
The Episcopal Church
The Forum for Youth Investment
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health/Got Transition
United States Society for Augmentative & Alternative Communication (USSAAC)
ZERO TO THREE

State and Local Organizations

Alabama

AIDS Action Coalition of Huntsville dba Thrive Alabama
Children First

Arizona

Arizona's Children Association

Child & Family Resources Inc.
Children's Action Alliance
William E. Morris Institute of Justice

California

California Children's Health Association
California School Nurses Association
Children Now
Children's Specialty Care Coalition
Family Voices of California
First 5 Santa Cruz County
GRACE - End Child Poverty CA
Maternal and Child Health Access
Orange County United Way
Rising Communities
Western Center on Law and Poverty

Colorado

Colorado Center on Law and Policy
Colorado Children's Campaign

Connecticut

United Way of Coastal and Western Connecticut

District of Columbia

Rebuilding Independence My Style

Florida

Florida's Children First
Florida Health Justice Project

Hawaii

Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawaii
Hawaii Children's Action Network Speaks!

Illinois

Brightpoint
Chicago Women's AIDS Project
EverThrive Illinois
Health & Medicine Policy Research Group
Health Justice Project
United Way of Lake County

Indiana

Covering Kids & Families of Indiana

Iowa

Common Good Iowa

Iowa Chapter of National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

Kansas

Families Together Inc./Family to Family Health Center

Kansas Action for Children

United Way of the Flint Hills

Kentucky

Kentucky Equal Justice Center

Louisiana

Clover

Maine

Maine Center for Economic Policy

Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Maine Children's Alliance

Maine Equal Justice

Maine Parent Federation

Opportunity Enterprises Incorporated

Maryland

Public Justice Center

The Parents' Place MD

University of Maryland, Karabelle Pizzigati Initiative in Advocacy for Children, Youth and Families

Voices of Hope, Inc.

Michigan

Center for Civil Justice

Insight Youth and Family Connections

Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health

The Arc Michigan

Minnesota

Minnesota Head Start Association

Mississippi

Mississippi Center for Justice

Missouri

A Red Circle

Bilingual International Assistant Services

Nebraska

Nebraska Appleseed

New Jersey

Family Voices New Jersey

SPAN Parent Advocacy Network

New Mexico

New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty

New Mexico Voices for Children

New York

Children's Aid

Citizen Action of New York

Community Service Center of Greater Williamsburg

Housing Works, Inc.

League of Women Voters of St. Lawrence County, New York

Long Island Center for Independent Living, Inc.

Medicaid Matters New York

Metro New York Health Care for All

New York State Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare

NYMHCAN

Physicians for a National Health Program - New York Metro

The Children's Agenda

North Carolina

Goldsboro Pediatrics

Jewish Family Services of Greater Charlotte

Prevent Blindness North Carolina

North Dakota

Family Voices of North Dakota

Ohio

Bellarmino Chapel

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy

Oregon

Oregon Pediatric Society

TFP Therapeutic Services, Inc.

Pennsylvania

AIDS Resource Alliance

Allies for Children

Bucks County Women's Advocacy Coalition
Centro Nueva Creación
PA Coalition for Oral Health
Parent Education & Advocacy Leadership (PEAL) Center
Pennsylvania Health Access Network
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children

South Carolina

Family Connection of South Carolina
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center

Tennessee

Family Voices of Tennessee
Tennessee Family Justice Center
Tennessee Health Care Campaign
Tennessee Justice Center

Texas

United Way of Brazoria County
United Ways of Texas

Utah

Voices for Utah Children

Vermont

Voices for Vermont's Children

Virginia

Health Brigade
Virginia Poverty Law Center

Washington

Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition
Northwest Health Law Advocates

West Virginia

Think Kids

Wisconsin

United Way of Door County
Wisconsin Family Ties