

Dear

As a person of faith, I urge you to do what you can to expand the State Children's Health Insurance Program, SCHIP, so that more children may have life-saving, cost effective health care.

This program of insuring children of low income families has had broad bipartisan support, and is most successful in getting preventive medical care to children who would otherwise be without such care. Children's lives are improved and emergency room visits avoided as a result of SCHIP.

To use one example, children with asthma are much less likely to require hospitalization once they are enrolled in SCHIP. SCHIP saves lives, and it also saves the taxpayers millions in emergency health care when preventive, primary care is more available. We all benefit from the program. Now we need to cover more children at risk.

There are bills in Congress that expand SCHIP so that more low income, uninsured families would be eligible--up to 300% of the federal poverty level. This would be paid for by increasing the tax on tobacco--also a good, healthy idea since raising the price of tobacco is the most effective way to deter children and teens from taking up the habit.

I urge you to put children's health care above political considerations, and above the concerns of the insurance industry. It's the right thing to do.

Let's get life saving health care to all of America's children. Please vote to expand SCHIP.

Sincerely,