

## Statements of Members of the United States Senate Regarding the Importance of Insuring Adults

Senator Jeff **Bingaman**: “More than 45 million Americans already lack health insurance. Any actions we take in re-writing SCHIP should reduce that number, not add to it. SCHIP has always been about flexibility, and it would be a mistake for the federal government to tell my state it can’t cover adults.” Bingaman is a member of the Senate Finance Committee and the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

Senator Richard **Durbin**: “When parents are covered, they are more likely to enroll their children in a health insurance plan. Illinois is one of eleven states that offer parents health coverage under SCHIP, and our state has seen an increase in the number of children covered. Allowing other states to do what Illinois has done is one of the best ways to ensure we provide quality health care to the nine million uninsured children in America.”

Senator Russ **Feingold**: “SCHIP is critical to thousands of adults enrolled in BadgerCare, Wisconsin’s program to provide health care coverage for uninsured families. Eliminating adult coverage would hurt tens of thousands of expectant mothers and parents of children enrolled in Medicaid and SCHIP.”

Senator Amy **Klobuchar**: “This is yet another example of states leading the way on crucial issues and the federal government playing catch up. States shouldn’t be penalized for successfully lowering the number of uninsured children and adults and the SCHIP Reauthorization bill should maintain the state’s flexibility to expand coverage to uninsured people.”

Senator Herb **Kohl**: “Wisconsin’s program, BadgerCare, has used the SCHIP funds to extend coverage to hundreds of thousands of children and parents since 1997. Currently, our state’s program serves over 66,000 individuals and has won praise from policy makers and beneficiaries alike for its efficiency and ease-of-use. That is why we need to work in a bipartisan matter to reauthorize SCHIP, before it expires at the end of September.”

Senator Blanche **Lincoln**, a member of the Senate Finance Committee: “Along with Medicaid, SCHIP has served an invaluable role in reducing the ranks of our nation’s uninsured. While covering the millions of children who remain uninsured should be our top priority, we also have to recognize that state flexibility in covering adult populations can be very beneficial. For example, expanding SCHIP coverage to pregnant women can significantly improve the health of hundreds of thousands of infants born each year, and expanding coverage to parents not only serves to cover additional insured individuals,

but also increases the likelihood that they will take the steps necessary to enroll their children.”

Senator Robert **Menendez**: “I have seen ample evidence in my home state of New Jersey of the importance of SCHIP coverage – not only for some of our neediest children, but for their parents as well. As coverage for parents increases, so does coverage for children. We will continue to fight in the Senate to maintain SCHIP coverage for adults so that many in our country who need health care the most are able to get it.”

Senator Barack **Obama**: “SCHIP’s expansion to cover Illinois parents has allowed 55,000 more children to gain access to health care coverage. We know what works in Illinois, and we must guarantee continued state flexibility as we reauthorize SCHIP to ensure families can keep their health insurance coverage. Repealing adult coverage could cause over 200,000 Illinois parents to lose their coverage and have a ripple effect on coverage for children.”

Senator Mark **Pryor** “Federal dollars from SCHIP can help bridge critical health care services to low income workers. Arkansas has made an important effort to improve access to health care for working adults, and I want to make sure my state continues to have the flexibility to address the problem of the uninsured.”

Senator Harry **Reid**: “All the evidence demonstrates that through covering parents, we are better able to reach the children who are eligible but not enrolled in the program. It is a sad fact that there are currently 6 million children who are not enrolled in SCHIP or Medicaid even though they are eligible for one of those programs. Reaching out to parents helps us reach and cover those children.”

Senator Ken **Salazar**: ““Right now, Colorado’s CHIP program, CHIP+, not only covers more than 50,000 kids, but also provides 1,300 pregnant women with pre-natal care that promotes the health and well-being of infants and saves scarce resources by preventing premature births as well as infant and childhood illnesses and disabilities. This is a good example of the kind of flexibility that states can pursue under CHIP. My staff and I recently held meetings across Colorado with local health care professionals on the State Children’s Health Insurance Program, they all agree that SCHIP and programs like it are largely successful in helping cover children, and we need to build on these successes with insight and ideas from other states.”

Senator Sheldon **Whitehouse**: “Thousands of Rhode Islanders have health insurance thanks to RIteCare and the federal SCHIP funds that support it. With tens of millions of Americans lacking health coverage, it doesn’t make sense to deny these families the care they depend on as they’re struggling to stay afloat. I applaud Senator Jack Reed’s strong leadership on this issue and will be proud to join him to fight to ensure this program has the flexibility it needs.” Whitehouse is a cosponsor of legislation offered by Senators John Rockefeller (D-W.V.) and Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) that would support SCHIP’s flexibility in offering coverage to adults.