

Press Release

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Schauer, Brater, and Local Health Experts Urge Support for Children's Health Insurance

Without Federal funding, thousands of Michigan children may go without coverage

LANSING-Senate Democratic Leader Mark Schauer (D-Battle Creek), and Senator Liz Brater (D-Ann Arbor) stood with local health experts in Ann Arbor today to urge support for children's health insurance. President Bush recently vetoed a bill that would have reauthorized the State Children's Health Insurance Program, which provides critical care for thousands of Michigan children. In fact, 55,000 currently covered are in jeopardy of losing insurance and an additional 25,000 could be covered under the current proposal.

"Democrats and Republicans around the country and across this state agree - providing health insurance for our children is the right thing to do," said Senator Schauer. "We must put the health and well-being of our children above party politics or rigid ideology."

Following strong bipartisan support in both the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives, the House is expected to hold a vote to override the veto this Thursday, October 18. Sixty-nine Senators voted in favor of the measure and three Michigan Republicans, Fred Upton, Vern Ehlers, and Candice Miller, crossed party lines to support it as well.

"Keeping children healthy helps them do better in school and allows them to have a chance at living a more positive, productive life," said Senator Brater. "As Michigan continues to struggle with budget challenges, this federal funding is critical to providing care for those in need."

Schauer and Brater are sponsors of a measure, SR 117, introduced in Lansing last week to urge Congress to override the veto. The Michigan House of Representatives approved a similar resolution with overwhelming bipartisan support last Thursday.

"This program has helped reduce the number of uninsured children in Michigan by 38 percent," said Dr. Valerie Castle, Chair of the University of Michigan's Department of Pediatrics. "With more than 100,000 Michigan children still lacking insurance, losing these resources would be a terrible step backward for our state."

According to the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health from the University of Michigan, 83 percent of respondents believe that government should

provide coverage for children in a family with income at 200 percent of the poverty level.
Details of the poll can be found at
<http://www.med.umich.edu/mott/research/chearschip.html>.

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