



September 13, 2007

The Honorable Harry M. Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Boehner
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Reid, Senator McConnell, Speaker Pelosi and Representative Boehner,

Research has clearly shown us the connection between a child's health and his or her ability to be successful in school, and ultimately in life. Healthier children are more successful, a fact that, when coupled with our moral obligation to care for our nation's children, has helped spur efforts to improve health care for the youngest Americans.

It's also why there's been such strong and steadfast support in both parties and in all regions of the country for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) ever since its creation in 1997. This program has enabled millions of children the opportunity to see a doctor, to receive preventative care and to live healthier lives.

Yet the progress we have made is now threatened. For health and moral reasons, Congress must pass and the President must sign a reauthorization of SCHIP by September 30, 2007. Without timely reauthorization and funding, it will be virtually impossible for states to continue coverage for children already enrolled in SCHIP programs. According to the Congressional Research Service, without reauthorization thirty five states, including Kansas will face federal funding shortfalls in FY2008. Fifteen of those states, including Georgia, will exhaust federal matching funds by the end of October 2007.

While we are encouraged that both the House and Senate have voted to continue this critical health care effort, we are concerned that a consensus bill will not be agreed upon before the September 30 deadline. As the chairs of our respective partisan Governors associations, we implore the President and members of Congress from both parties resolve differences expeditiously and not allow partisan politics to thwart continuation of this vital program.

This effort to enhance the health of children is a bright spot in an otherwise troubled American health care system and we urge your continued support for it, and by extension, our nation's children.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Kathleen Sebelius in black ink.

Governor Kathleen Sebelius
Kansas

Handwritten signature of Sonny Perdue in black ink.

Governor Sonny Perdue
Georgia