

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 7, 2007

Chairman John D. Dingell  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Joe Barton  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2322A Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Dingell and Ranking Member Barton:

As the House Committee on Energy and Commerce considers reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), we would like to collectively express our support for policies that are important to the New England region. We urge you to support SCHIP reauthorization legislation that is fully funded and will help our states' efforts to cover more children.

All of America's children should have the health care they need to grow and learn, and New England can be proud of its efforts and track record for covering our kids. All six of our states have childhood uninsurance rates well below the national average as well as strong public and private systems aimed at providing high-quality, accessible care to our children. We have made these advancements in a bi-partisan manner during both Democratic and Republican administrations in our states.

However our region faces a dramatically higher cost of living than other parts of the country, making it more difficult for individuals to purchase health insurance on their own. Four New England states (CT, MA, NH & VT) cover children up to 300% of FPL and one state (RI) covers children up to 250% of FPL. It is critical that states have the flexibility to cover residents at higher income levels to compensate for these geographical cost differences.

Despite our successes, there are more than 260,000 uninsured children in New England, most of who are eligible for SCHIP or Medicaid but are not yet enrolled. In the House budget resolution, we took a significant step by indicating our willingness to provide \$50 billion in new funding for SCHIP reauthorization. Now we need to deliver on that pledge so that we can have the resources to do more to reach out to these many eligible yet unenrolled children.

SCHIP reauthorization also presents a unique opportunity to make significant advancements in improving pediatric quality of care. Too often, quality care initiatives focus solely on adult medicine and leave pediatric initiatives behind. We believe that pediatric quality care measurements need to be developed and piloted so that we can further improve the care and cost-effectiveness of our children's healthcare.

As you and your colleagues consider SCHIP reauthorization, we strongly believe Congress should act in a bi-partisan manner to:

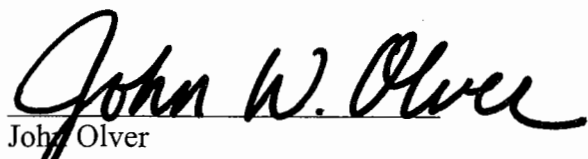
- **Deliver on the pledge of \$50 billion in new funding.** This is the minimum amount of money states need to sustain their existing SCHIP programs and move forward to cover more uninsured children.
- **Ensure that no one should lose coverage and make care accessible to additional children who need assistance.** Funding for covering uninsured children through the SCHIP program should not come from cuts to other programs or populations that are currently covered. It would be a travesty if SCHIP reauthorization wound up increasing the number of uninsured Americans. To preclude this outcome, SCHIP reauthorization should include:
  - The option to cover children up to 300% of the federal poverty level.
  - The option to provide SCHIP and Medicaid coverage to those legal immigrant children and pregnant women who currently cannot be covered until they have been in the country for five years.
  - Relief from the red-tape intensive federal mandate to document citizenship status in Medicaid, a provision that has caused individuals in our region to lose healthcare coverage.
  - The option to cover parents of children enrolled in SCHIP and Medicaid.
- **Promote pediatric quality of care initiatives** by developing, piloting and funding quality improvement measurements which can ultimately be used to enhance care and cost-effectiveness.

We know there are many challenging financing and policy issues facing the House as we move forward with SCHIP reauthorization. Please work to support the provisions we have outlined in this letter both because they are critical to our six states but also because they are important to America's children.

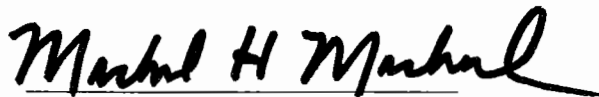
Sincerely,



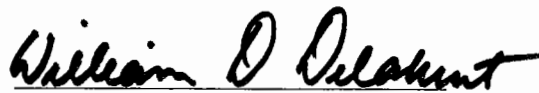
Patrick Kennedy  
Member of Congress



John W. Olver  
Member of Congress



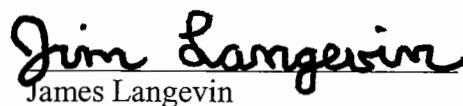
Michael Michaud  
Member of Congress



William Delahunt  
Member of Congress



Jim McGovern  
Member of Congress



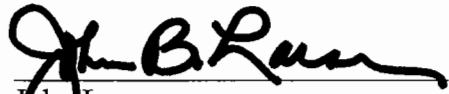
James Langevin  
Member of Congress



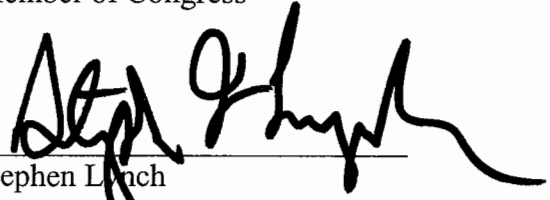
Michael Capuano  
Member of Congress



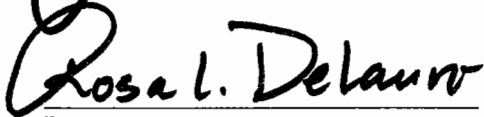
Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress



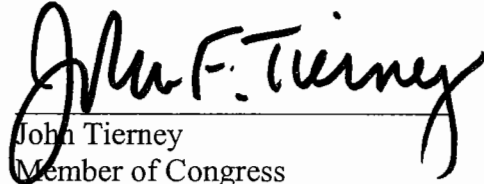
John Larson  
Member of Congress



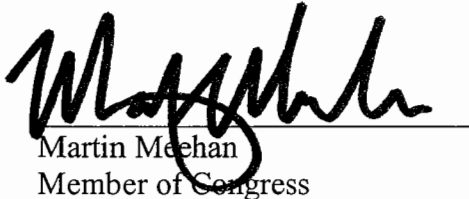
Stephen Lynch  
Member of Congress



Rosa DeLauro  
Member of Congress



John Tierney  
Member of Congress



Martin Meehan  
Member of Congress



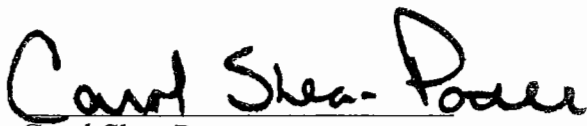
Barney Frank  
Member of Congress



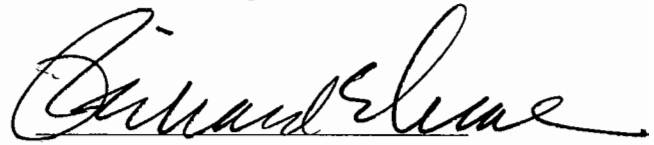
Christopher Murphy  
Member of Congress



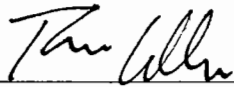
Paul Hodes  
Member of Congress



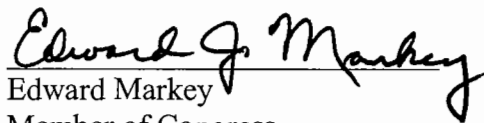
Carol Shea-Porter  
Member of Congress



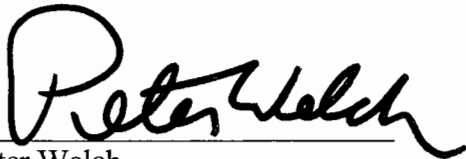
Richard Neal  
Member of Congress



Thomas Allen  
Member of Congress



Edward Markey  
Member of Congress



Peter Welch  
Member of Congress