



CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN



MAKING CHILDREN & FAMILIES THE PRIORITY

Dear Mrs. Bush...

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Did you know that over 9 million children growing up in our country do not have access to health insurance? Without health insurance children are unable to receive the check-ups, flu-shots, vaccinations and dental visits they need in order to grow up healthy. By participating in this letter writing campaign you will help strengthen support for the reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP, which was created to provide health insurance for children whose families otherwise cannot afford it.

LEARN MORE...

Learn more about First Focus and the State Children's Health Insurance Program by visiting:

www.firstfocus.net

WHAT IS SCHIP?

The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) was created in 1997 to provide health care for children in working families who are too poor to afford private coverage on their own. Prior to the creation of SCHIP, about 15 percent of all children were uninsured.

Since 1997, the number of uninsured children has fallen by almost a third, and today SCHIP covers more than 6 million children. If a program can produce those results in just ten years, imagine what it can accomplish in another ten. However, in order for that to happen, Congress must renew the SCHIP program this year.

THE SCHIP DEBATE AND THE THREAT OF A VETO

Just a few weeks ago, Members of Congress in both the Senate and the House of Representatives agreed to renew the SCHIP program. Soon they will vote to pass a bill that will extend the program for another five years. Once the bill is passed by Congress, it will be sent to President Bush. At that time, President Bush will have the choice to sign the legislation into law, allowing the SCHIP program to continue, or to reject the program with a veto, sending the bill back to Congress. President Bush is threatening to veto the SCHIP program because he does not agree that more money should be spent on it. If this happens, millions of American children will lose their healthcare coverage, and will not be able to receive the check-ups, flu-shots, and vaccinations they need to grow up healthy.

THE LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN

In an effort to stop the President from vetoing the renewal of the SCHIP program, First Focus, a bipartisan advocacy organization affiliated with the America's Promise Alliance, is launching a letter writing campaign to First Lady Laura Bush. As a long standing champion for children, particularly in the areas of education and early childhood development, we are hoping to use Mrs. Bush's strong record and credibility on these issues to persuade her to weigh in on SCHIP's future and to take a favorable stance on this important debate.

Specifically, the campaign will call for letters to Mrs. Bush from children from across the nation, with each letter highlighting the importance of health care for children and including a personal plea to Mrs. Bush.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Not only can you write a letter to Mrs. Bush, but you can also set up a local letter writing campaign of your own. Round up your friends, neighbors, classmates, teammates, or find a group of younger kids and get them to all write letters to Mrs. Bush. Collect everyone's letters and mail them back to us to be included in the package of letters we send to Mrs. Bush.

WHAT LETTERS SHOULD INCLUDE:

- A heart-felt, creative, personal message about the letter writer's health and how important it is to them that they are able to be healthy.
- The letter writer's name, age and return address in the letter, in case Mrs. Bush would like to respond.
- If possible, include a photograph, and/or a drawing.

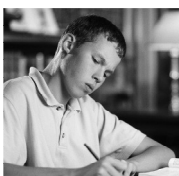


LETTER WRITING WITH LITTLE KIDS:

When working with a group of younger kids, it's important to remember that they probably don't understand what health insurance is. Instead of trying to explain what may be a complex concept for them, get the kids talking about what it means to be healthy. If the kids are really young, (6-8 years old) consider starting your conversation with the kids by reading a children's book about visiting the doctor. After the book, ask the kids about a time when they were sick. Ask them if they were able to visit a doctor. Tell the children that today they get to write a letter and/or draw a picture for Mrs. Bush to tell her about their health and why it's important that they stay healthy.

Some ideas for letters from little kids include:

- "Dear Mrs. Bush, I don't like it when I get sick. I know that I need to be able to go to the doctor to be able to get the checkups and shots I need so I don't get sick and so I can grow up healthy. Without health insurance I can't go to the doctor."
- "Dear Mrs. Bush, Yesterday I went to the doctor and he told me I was healthy. Please make sure I am able to stay healthy. I don't like getting shots but I know I need them so that I don't get the measles or mumps and so that I don't miss school."
- "Dear Mrs. Bush, I have asthma and my medicine helps me breathe so I can play basketball."
- "Dear Mrs. Bush, I have cancer. I need to be able to see my doctors if I am going to be able to stay healthy. Please don't take away my health insurance."



LETTER WRITING WITH OLDER KIDS/TEENS:

Older kids and teenagers will be able to understand the importance of health insurance. Make sure to inform your letter writers about SCHIP then ask them to write a letter for Mrs. Bush that includes a personal message about their health as well as statements about why they think it's important that more children be provided with access to health insurance.



SENDING THE LETTERS:

To ensure maximum impact, we are asking that all letters be sent to First Focus so that we can send them as a package to Mrs. Bush at the White House. Previous experience indicates that sending a large package of letters at one time has a much greater impact than sending letters individually. In addition, we will set aside a selection of the best 25-30 letters for the press.

MAIL YOUR LETTERS TO...

Christopher Spina
First Focus
909 N. Washington Street
Suite 400
Alexandria, VA 22314-1556

DEADLINE FOR LETTERS:

Please send your letters to First Focus by **Monday, September 10, 2007**. We plan to mail the package to Mrs. Bush shortly thereafter.

QUESTIONS...

If you have questions about this letter writing campaign, please contact Chris by emailing him at:

ChrisS@firstfocus.net