

## House Passes Bipartisan Children's Health Insurance Legislation

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Eshoo urges President to sign bill to cover 10 million low-income kids

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Congresswoman Anna G. Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, voted for final House passage of legislation to provide health insurance to 10 million low-income children, and she urged the President to sign the bill into law.

"This is a matter of priorities," Eshoo said. "This bill enables low-income children to have healthcare coverage by investing \$35 billion over five years without charging it to our national credit card. The President says it is too expensive; however, \$10 billion a month is being spent in Iraq.

"The President should sign this bill and open the doctor's office door to millions of kids," Eshoo said. "There couldn't be a better investment in the future of our country."

The House approved H.R. 976, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) Reauthorization Act, by a bipartisan vote of 265 to 159. The bill is the result of a strong bipartisan compromise between House and Senate negotiators and supported by 43 Republican and Democratic governors and more than 270 organizations representing a broad range of Americans.

H.R. 976 reauthorizes and improves SCHIP, which is scheduled to expire on September 30th. The legislation preserves healthcare coverage for 6.6 million children enrolled in the program now and provides resources for states to identify and enroll an additional 4 million uninsured kids.

The bill also:

- Provides quality dental coverage to all children enrolled in SCHIP.

- Ensures states will offer mental health services on par with medical and surgical benefits covered under SCHIP.

- Protects medically necessary benefits for low-income children.

- Provides health care coverage to expectant mothers.

- Provides \$100 million to simplify and streamline enrollment of eligible children.

- Allows states to provide premium assistance for SCHIP-eligible kids to secure private insurance through a parent's employer-sponsored coverage.

H.R. 976 will raise \$35.7 billion over five years with an increase in the tobacco tax and will not add a cent to the deficit or the national debt.

Eshoo, a Member of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health, has been a champion of the SCHIP since Congress established the landmark program in 1997.

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