



COLORADO CENTER
on LAW & POLICY

Justice and Economic Security for *all* Coloradans

Call Sen. Salazar Now!
Tell him to support the Bingaman Amendment on SCHIP!
Proposal would help protect health care for kids

Tomorrow, the U.S. Senate Finance Committee will consider legislation to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Plan (SCHIP). **We just learned that Sen. Bingaman is offering an amendment that would help make sure eligible children are not losing health care coverage due to Citizen Documentation requirements. We need YOU to urge Sen. Salazar, who sits on the Finance Committee, to vote YES on the Bingaman amendment.**

Contact Sen. Salazar NOW:

Senator Ken Salazar (202) 224-5852

Email: <http://salazar.senate.gov/contact/email.cfm>

Here's the problem now:

Citizen documentation requirements included in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 mandated that most low-income children, parents and pregnant women who state they are U.S. citizens must produce a passport or birth certificate, naturalization document, or similar documentation to prove they are U.S. citizens when they apply for Medicaid. The citizenship documentation requirement has created a serious barrier to enrollment in health coverage for citizens, setting back the substantial progress states have made in simplifying and streamlining access to Medicaid for low-income children. Eligible pregnant women also are facing roadblocks to enrollment, with potential consequences for the health of their babies.

Why is this a problem? Many people, particularly low-income people, do not have birth certificates in their possession and do not have passports. Obtaining these documents can take substantial time and cost money. Obtaining original documents means that people have to take time off of work to visit Medicaid offices during business hours. The requirement to prove identity has been particularly problematic for children who may not have acceptable forms of identification.

It also is costing tax-payer dollars. A 2007 study in Colorado showed that the citizen documentation requirement cost more money than it saved, while also preventing eligible U.S. citizens, including children, from securing benefits.

Here's what the amendment would do:

It requires the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Social Security Administration (SSA) to certify that the existing citizen documentation rule and a new data-matching option included in the SCHIP reauthorization legislation would not result in a significant number of children nationwide losing health care coverage.

If HHS and SSA cannot certify that a significant number of children would lose coverage, then the rule would become mandatory for states.

If they DO certify that a significant number of children would lose coverage, however, the rule would be optional for states, giving each state the flexibility to determine what works for them.

Action is needed now to ensure that Sen. Salazar votes in favor of the Bingaman amendment.

Reauthorizing the health insurance program is expected to expand coverage to more low-income children in Colorado and throughout the U.S. We must make sure that the Senate passes the strongest SCHIP legislation possible!

In this national economic crisis, it is crucial that Congress take swift action to reauthorize SCHIP and strengthen this essential safety net for low-income children.

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Tell Sen. Salazar:

Vote YES on the Bingaman Amendment!

Vote YES to Strengthen Health Insurance for Kids!

Vote YES on any other strengthening amendments!

Vote YES on SCHIP Reauthorization!