



NEWS RELEASE

Center for Public Policy Priorities

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BIG TOBACCO CHOOSES SMOKING OVER CHILDREN; TARGETS SENATOR HUTCHISON

Austin, TX— Congress is expected to vote as early as tomorrow on reauthorizing the Children's Health Insurance Program. The agreement between the House and the Senate would increase the number of low-income children CHIP will cover. The increase would be completely paid for by an increase in tobacco taxes.

Big Tobacco has targeted one bipartisan leader, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, a supporter of the Senate's CHIP bill on which the compromise bill is based. Philip Morris paid to send the flyer (see below) to smokers across Texas urging them to put smoking over health care for children.

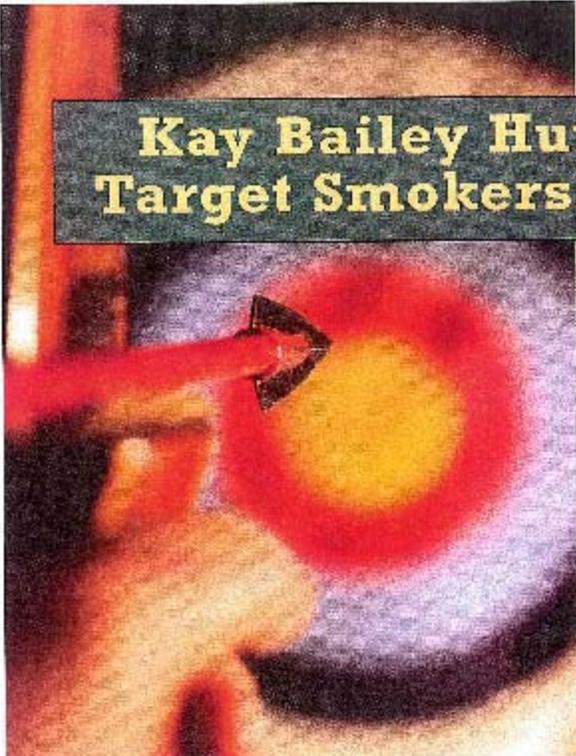
Advocates for Texas children protested the targeting of Senator Hutchison, and ask what role the tobacco industry is playing in the President's veto threat. "Texans appreciate Senator Hutchison leadership on CHIP," said Anne Dunkelberg, Associate Director of the Center for Public Policy Priorities. "With the highest rate of uninsured kids in the nation, Texas more than any other state needs a stronger Children's Health Insurance Program." Bee Morehead, Executive Director of the interfaith group Texas Impact, said: "Tobacco companies are shamelessly pressuring Congress to protect their industry at the expense of children."

The Texas Legislature recently passed a new law to increase Texas CHIP enrollment, but advocates warn that congressional action is needed to fund the growth. "CHIP is a successful program providing cost-effective health care through private insurers for low-income working Texas families," said Barbara Best, Director of Children's Defense Fund for Texas. "Our legislature paved the way to health care for 127,000 more children to enroll, but to make it happen the Texas congressional delegation must stand up for Texas children."

The compromise bill addresses several concerns with the House bill, by eliminating Medicare savings as a funding source and adding strict limits on states' ability to increase income caps for CHIP. "Our leaders need to understand that this is a true compromise that makes sure that CHIP programs will target low-income uninsured children," said Susan Craven, Executive Director of Texans Care For Children. "With nearly a million uninsured Texas children in the CHIP income group, we need this legislation to win the battle to get Texas children the health care they need."

Details about the bill are available from Senate Finance Committee Chairman Baucus on his website at <http://www.senate.gov/~finance/press/Bpress/2007press/prb092107d.pdf>.

Here is the Philip Morris ad:



Kay Bailey Hutchison Voted to Target Smokers for Higher Taxes

P.O. Morris USA
PO Box 29,002
Fairfax, VA 22026-0002

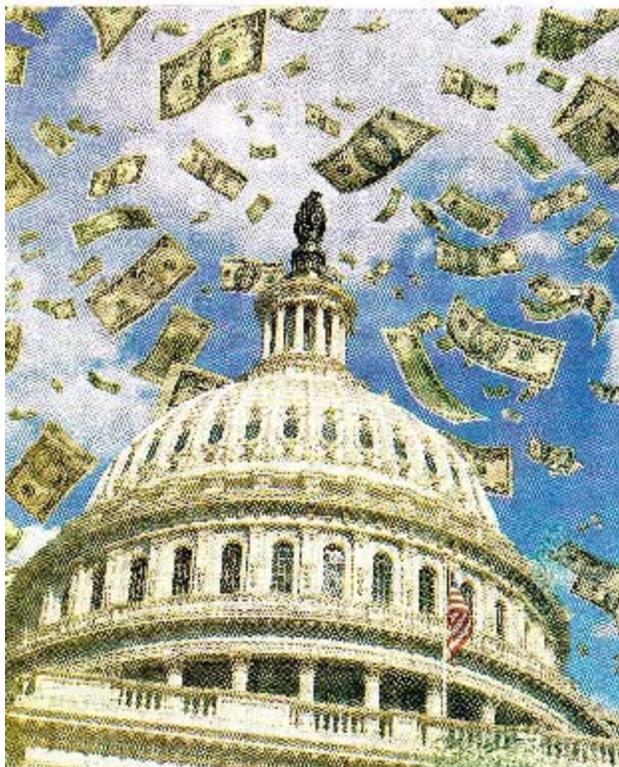
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Kay Bailey Hutchison Voted in the Senate to Raise Your Cigarette Taxes

The Senate has singled out smokers for an unfair tax increase — and Kay Bailey Hutchison went along, voting to raise taxes on cigarettes **\$6.10 a carton**.

That means more money for Washington — and less money in your wallet.

Your voice can make a difference. Tell Senator Hutchison to stop this tax increase while there is still time — because smokers are voters too.

Call 1-866-527-4494 today — or visit stoptheFETIncrease.com.

Say No To Higher Cigarette Taxes!

It's Your Right: Register and Vote

Paid for by Philia Morris USA

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The Center for Public Policy Priorities is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization committed to improving conditions for low- and moderate-income Texans.