



CPPP STATEMENT REGARDING SENATOR CORNYN'S SCHIP CLAIMS

In the debate over reauthorizing the Children's Health Insurance Program, Senator Cornyn is talking about plans that did not pass Congress. He is touting the so-called Kids First Act that he supported at \$9 billion and he is disparaging the original House plan and the original Senate plan. What Texans need to evaluate is the bipartisan bill for \$35 billion that did pass, which the President vetoed. With a vote to override the veto coming up, the bipartisan bill is the plan that is on the table. It would cover almost 4 million more children.

Texas needs the bipartisan bill. The Legislature is trying to add back 200,000 children after the terrible 2003 cuts and provide new prenatal care. Thanks to the hard negotiation of Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, who voted for the bipartisan bill, it brings Texas more money and we are not penalized in any way.

Senator Cornyn has raised several concerns, but those concerns are addressed in the bipartisan bill. The bill targets only low-income children. The bill's new cap of 300% FPL is just under \$62,000 gross pre-tax income (not net income) for a family of 4. According to the Congressional Budget Office, 84% of the children gaining coverage under the bill are either on the program now (but without the new money would have to be cut from the program for lack of funding) or are eligible now but not enrolled. Only 600,000 of the 3.8 million children gaining coverage under the bill are not currently eligible and would become eligible due to expansions.

The bill cuts out adults. The bill prohibits new waivers to cover parents under CHIP. States that have received waivers in the past to cover low-income parents under CHIP will be permitted to transition parents to a separate block grant with a lower federal match. And the bill retains the current law prohibition of waivers to allow coverage for childless adults. States that were given waivers in the past to cover childless adults will have these waivers terminated after a one-year period.

Senator Cornyn persists in saying that the Kids First Act (the McConnell-Lott amendment) would have covered an additional 1.3 million children. This is inaccurate. Senator Cornyn is misreading the Congressional Budget Office tables that scored the amendment. We brought this error to his attention by a letter e-mailed to him on August 1, but he continues to make this inaccurate claim. We are posting both our original letter to him and the original CBO Table. His plan would have barely covered current enrollment.

If the number of uninsured children grows this year at the same rate as last year, nearly 2,000 additional children will become uninsured every day. What we need are solutions, not rhetoric. As the Senator admits, CHIP is a great program for the kids who have it. It would also be great for the kids who don't. We urge Senator Cornyn and the other members of the Texas Congressional delegation who voted against the bipartisan bill to turn around and join the fight for children and for our future.