
Statement of Chairman John D. Dingell before the Committee on Rules on H.R. 3963, The Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007

Statement of Congressman John D. Dingell, Chairman

Committee on Energy and Commerce

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

ON H.R. 3963, THE CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007
October 24, 2007

Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to come before you. I ask that H.R. 3963, the revised "Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007" (CHIP) be made in order for consideration by the House. H.R. 3963 will provide health insurance for 10 million children who are now uninsured. It is focused on helping the neediest and most vulnerable among us, but it also does so in a fiscally responsible way.

This is a good bill with strong bipartisan support in both the House and Senate. We have listened to suggestions, found common ground, and have introduced a revised bill that still meets our goal of health care for 10 million kids.

H.R. 3963 addresses and further strengthens areas of concern raised during previous considerations of CHIP:

First,
the bill ensures that CHIP will only cover eligible low-income children and pregnant women. It retains bonuses to encourage States to increase

enrollment of the lowest-income children who are eligible but not enrolled.

Second, H.R. 3963 maintains that CHIP is a health program for children. Coverage for childless adults will be phased out within one year.

Third, it enhances provisions to prevent CHIP from replacing employer-sponsored health insurance. This bill requires States to implement best practices so that kids who are in employer-sponsored health care stay where they are.

Fourth, this bill further confirms that CHIP is for U.S. citizens only. It strengthens the role of the Social Security Administration in verifying citizenship for CHIP. States are not allowed to use these Federal funds for non-citizens.

I hope those who did not support previous CHIP reauthorization bills will vote for this legislation. H.R. 3963 will provide health care for 10 million needy kids in the United States who are now uninsured. What we must do is pass the reauthorization, and we should do so without further delay.

I respectfully ask the Committee on Rules to approve an appropriate rule granting the prompt consideration of this vital legislation.