



Faithful Reform in Health Care

ELEVATING THE FAITH COMMUNITY'S MORAL AND PROPHETIC VOICE
IN SUPPORT OF AFFORDABLE QUALITY HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

September 22, 2007

**A Letter to Members of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives
from State, Regional and Local Faith Leadership
Regarding the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)**

To Members of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives:

The United States – the richest nation in the world – is home to over nine million children who do not have access to needed health care. For those affected, this is a personal and medical crisis; for others it is an economic or political crisis. But because we have the capacity to solve the problem and won't, for all of us it is a moral crisis. How much longer can we live with ourselves knowing that our children are living sicker and dying younger simply because they cannot get the health care they need?

As leaders of faith communities in our states, we believe that all of us have been created in the image of God, and in each new act of creation, we are given the sacred obligation to care for one another. Such care includes tending to the health of our neighbors. In light of that obligation, the faith communities in which we serve are committed to issues integral to health and health care.

It will take all of us – individuals, families, communities, states and the federal government – working together and sharing responsibility for our children's health care needs. With the pending reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), we are writing to ask you to accept responsibility for the role the federal government must take. We thank you for taking the first steps toward reauthorizing and expanding SCHIP. Knowing that the process has been tumultuous, your perseverance in doing the right thing for our children is commendable. But we know the job is not finished until the two houses of Congress have reconciled the differences in the two bills, reauthorized SCHIP and funded it at the level needed to move toward getting ALL of our children the health care they need.

Toward that end, we are requesting three things:

1. **We urge you to reauthorize and expand SCHIP** before it expires on September 30, to protect those children who already are in the program and to provide

services to others who are long overdue in getting the health care they need. When polls show that 84% of us support the reauthorization and expansion of SCHIP, we know that there is strong bi-partisan support for this program across the country. Further, we know that this support mirrors the opinions of the people who sit in our pews – Republicans, Democrats, and Independents – people of faith who believe that our children should be regarded as sacred gifts entrusted to our care, not as pawns in a game of partisan politics. We ask you to look beyond political ideology; to consider the teachings of your own faith tradition; to reclaim what you have believed about humans being created in the image of God; and to discern the best course of action based on those understandings.

2. **We urge you to push for the strongest possible conference bill** – a bill that closely resembles the SCHIP provisions in the House bill which is designed to cover more children and provide more of the services they need. We believe that ALL children should be afforded needed health care, and that comprehensive services are a part of that equation. As people of faith, we are reminded that the wholeness of our mind, body and spirit contribute to the overall well-being which God intends for us. Providing needed health care for our children confirms our role as partners in fulfilling Gods promises for them. At this moment we have the opportunity to set our sights on giving this generation of children the healthy start they need to move toward becoming healthy productive members of our society.
3. **We urge you to reject any new interpretations of current SCHIP regulations**, such as those recently mandated by the administration, that limit the states' flexibility to meet the needs of its children and their families. We know our colleagues in the states are on the front lines in addressing many human needs, including the health care services now up for debate. We do not see the feared movement from private to public insurance. We do not see our congregants wasting precious family resources so that they are not able to afford health insurance. We do not see people taking advantage of a free system. Instead, we see families struggling to make ends meet even at 300% of the poverty level as employers cut health care benefits, as out-of-pocket expenses lead to bankruptcy, and as pre-existing medical conditions make getting any kind of insurance impossible. As 50 people die prematurely every day because they cannot get needed health care (an average of one person per state per day!), we urge you to guarantee flexibility and encourage creativity as our state leaders address the needs unique to their needs.

What is at stake is not the money we may spend, but the moral compass of our country. It's a matter of how we choose to spend our abundant resources. It's a matter of deciding what we value as a nation. We urge you to make our children a national priority, and to reauthorize SCHIP with sufficient funding to cover as many children as possible. Until we as a nation agree that everyone should have needed health care, it is imperative that we at least get our children covered. It's very simply the right and moral thing to do.

As you deliberate in the coming days, we certainly will be in prayer for the children of our country, that they may be spared the pain and suffering that accompanies the lack of

needed health care. We also will be praying for you, our elected leaders, that your deliberations and decisions might transcend partisan politics and reflect the moral vision of a nation that truly values all of our children.

Respectfully signed by leaders of faith communities in the states:

Arkansas

Jeanne Koons, Church Women United, Hot Springs Village

California

Rick Schlosser, California Church IMPACT, Sacramento

Rev. Walt Parry, Fresno Metro Ministry, Fresno

Edith Siddall, Church Women United, San Diego

Renee Bauerly, Daughters of Mary and Joseph, San Pedro

Mary Gilbert, East Bay Ministers' Wives & Ministers' Widows, Oakland

Sister Mary O'Connor, Daughters of Mary and Joseph, Rancho Palos Verdes

Sister Margaret O'Rourke, Daughters of Mary and Joseph

The Rev. Dr. Keith Edwards, First Presbyterian Church, Altadena

Pastor Daren Barron, World Conquerors Church

Michelle Hatchell, World Conquerors Church

Monique Barron, World Conquerors Church

Colorado

Rev. Donna McWhirter, Church Women United in Colorado

Connecticut

Janis Hoyle, Church Women United in Connecticut, President

Betty Allen, Connecticut State Board of Church Women United

Carolyn Hardin Engelhardt, United Methodist Church

Joy Fitzgerald, Wesley United Methodist Church, South Windsor

Lois Harwick, Church Women United, Glastonbury

Sara Parker, Outreach Committee, United Methodist Church of Putnam

Candace Smith, United Methodist Church of Danielson

Rev. Stephen Volpe, Cheshire United Methodist Church

Delaware

Ellen Holler, Church Women United in Delaware & Maryland Upper Shore

Sister Regina Burns, Sisters of IHM, Wilmington

Sister Redempta Sweeney, IHM, St. Mark's High School

Florida

Dr. Debra Susie, Florida IMPACT

Nancy O'Byrne, Diocese of St. Augustine Justice and Peace Commission

Mildred Barnes, Church Women United

Dorothy Branson, Church Women United

Debra Thomas, New Directions Community Outreach, Inc.

Rev. Dr. Donald & Ms. Jane Thompson, United Methodist Church; Manatee Unitarian-Universalist

Delena Stephens-Bowen, Families with Loved Ones in Prison (FLIP), Church Women United

Georgia

Bettie Durrah, Church Women United
 Mary Ann Figlino, Empowerment Program, Denver
 Beatrice Hoffman, Oakhurst Baptist Church, Decatur

Hawaii

Sister Leone Drexler, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Wailuku

Idaho

Mary Knodell, Church Women United Idaho

Illinois

Mary Anderson, Lutheran Advocacy Network, Barrington
 Rev. John Buttrick, Illinois Conference, United Church of Christ, Peoria
 Reverend Fran Bates, Fox Valley Association, United Church of Christ, Libertyville
 Ismay Ashford, DNA, Chicago
 Robert Dell, United Church of Christ Mental Illness Network, Sandwich
 Thomas Garlitz, Catholic Diocese of Joliet, Peace and Social Justice Ministry
 Rev. Edward Goode, United Church of Christ/Illinois Conference, Chicago
 Rev. Jonathan Knight, Fox Valley Association, Ohio Conference, United Church of Christ, Hampshire
 Rev. Jennifer Kottler, Protestants for the Common Good, Chicago
 Michael Linder, Fox Valley Association, United Church of Christ, Geneva
 Claudia Austin, Church Women United of Illinois, Northfield
 Edith Beach, Church Women United of Belleville
 Sister Benita Coffey, OSB, Benedictine Sisters of Chicago
 Rev. Ann Marie Coleman, University Church, Chicago
 Joan Criswell, Peoria Area Church Women United
 Joann Dennis, Church Women United - Rock Island/Milan Unit
 Evangelist Julia Hagwood, African Methodist Episcopal Church, Evanston
 Millicent Hankla, Church Women United - Illinois
 Rev. Conrad Heisner, Lake Fork United Church of Christ, Atwood
 Robin Henry, Parkview United Church of Christ, Canton
 Sister Sue Kilduski, Chicago
 Sister Sheila Kinsey, Justice, Peace & Integrity Office of Wheaton Franciscans, Wheaton
 Sister Marcelline Koch, Dominican Sisters, IL
 Laura Leon, St. Mary's Hope Lutheran Church, ELCA
 Donna Lowe, United Church of Christ, Park Forest
 Dr. Niva Lubin-Johnson, National Medical Association, Chicago
 Sister Stephanie Mertens, ASC, ASC Justice and Peace Office
 Dorothy Middleton, Church Women United, Peoria
 Pastor James Moody, Quinn Chapel AME Church, Chicago
 Rev. Dr. Calvin Morris, Community Renewal Society, Chicago
 Marjorie Parker, Church Women United of Carbondale
 Rev. Kirsten Peachey, Member, Pilgrim United Church of Christ Oak Park
 Rev. Curran Reichert, Open Prairie United Church of Christ, Princeton
 Ethel Russaw, Chicago Conference Lay Organization, AME Church, Chicago
 Sister Pastor Rosita Sanchez, Iglesia Misi3n del Valle/Mission of the Valley Church, Chicago
 Sister Patricia Schlarman, ASC, Trenton
 Sister Joan Shalapin, ASC, Adorers of the Blood of Christ, Red Bud
 Dr. Ron and Mary Trimmer, United Congregations of MetroEast, Mitchell

Margaret Tweet, Church Women United, Rock Island
 Sister Carol Welp, Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, Chicago
 Eugene Birmingham, Immanuel United Church of Christ, Bensonville
 Loy Tetzloff, First Congregational Church, Downers Grove, Bolingbrook
 Seth Carey, United Church of Christ, Glen Ellen
 Denise Griebler, St. Michael's United Church of Christ, Warrenville
 Chuck Maney, United Church of Christ, Ottawa
 JR Sandman, United Church of Christ, Oak Brook
 Brenda Larnell, African Methodist Episcopal Church, Fairview Heights
 Jane Fisler Hoffman, Illinois Conference, United Church of Christ
 Aurelia Jackson, Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church

Indiana

Rev. Stephen Gray, Indiana-Kentucky Conference, United Church of Christ, Indianapolis
 Rita Gaither-Gant, United Methodist Women
 Victor Frohne, United Church of Christ, LaPorte

Iowa

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 Rev. Kathleen Clark, Church Women United
 Sister Jeanie Hagedorn, Sisters of Humility, Des Moines
 Evalee Mickey, Pax Christi USA
 Sister Peggy Nolan, Sisters of Charity, BVM Leadership Team, Dubuque
 Sister Joy Peterson, Sisters of the Presentation, Dubuque
 Dianna Perry, Women's Missionary Society, Bethel AME Church, Iowa City

Kansas

Sister Rose Bahr, Center for Health and Wellness, Wichita
 Jackie Helms, South Central Region, Church Women United
 Gwen Howard, Church Women United
 Darlene Montgomery, United Methodist Women
 Sister Pat Nicholson, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
 Sarah Peters, United Methodist Women
 Lois Schrock, Presbyterian Women Northern Kansas
 Barb Scott, President, United Methodist Women
 Judith Shetter, United Methodist Women
 Sharon Springer, United Methodist Women in Kansas
 Leon Sequeira, MORE-2, No. Kansas City

Kentucky

Rev. Peggy Owens, Mid-Kentucky Presbytery
 Steven Johns-Boehme, Christian Church in Kentucky, Louisville
 Wilma Bennett, Church Women United in the Louisville Area
 Mary Carver, Church Women United
 Lula Howard, President, Church Women United, Louisville, KY
 Marilyn Johnson, Church Women United
 Garnet McIntire, Flemingsburg Church Women United
 Rose Nelson, Church Women United in Kentucky
 Vicki Ramsier, Church Women United in Kentucky
 Dee Reynolds, Church Women United, Lexington

Elizabeth Smith, Church Women United
 Laura Starr RN, Church Women United-LouisvilleKY

Maine

Rev. Diane Bennekamper, United Church of Christ, Cumberland
 Rev. William Bliss, Bath United Church of Christ, Bath
 Rev. Brad Hirst, United Church of Christ, York
 Mrs. Heather McLaughlin, South Congregational United Church of Christ, Kennebunkport
 Rev. Susan Savell, United Church of Christ, Brunswick
 Rev. Dr. Susan Stonestreet, United Christian Church, Lincolnville Center
 Carl Anderson, United Church of Christ, Portland

Maryland

Rev. Brenda Cardwell, Disciples Advocacy and Witness Network, Suitland
 Lari R. Grubbs, Christian Church Capital Area
 Julie Erickson, Presbytery of Baltimore, Annapolis
 N. Sharon Leatherman, Church Women United in Maryland
 Rev. Steven Ostendorf-Snell, Grace United Church of Christ, Taneytown
 Shirley A. Young, Church Women United, Anne Arundel County"
 Rev. Esther Ziegler, Frederick
 Roland England, United Church of Christ, Boonsboro

Massachusetts

Sister Rena Mae Gagnon, Little Franciscans of Mary Worcester
 Sister Carole Lombard, Sisters of St. Joseph, Brighton
 Rev. Kristin White, Church Women United, Maryland/Rhode Island

Michigan

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 Tobi Hanna-Davies, ISAAC-Interfaith Strategy for Advocacy & Action in the Community, Kalamazoo
 Bertha Barbee-McNeal, Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP ACT-SO
 Kathryn Blake, Mid Michigan District Women's Missionary Society CME
 Rev. Joseph Gagnon, MOSES Community Organization, Marysville
 Sister Mary Ellen Gondeck, Congregation of St. Joseph, Detroit
 Sister Riccardina Silvestri, St. Michael Church, Deford
 Carole M. Stow, Church Women United in Michigan / Church Women United in Bay City
 Larry Kalajinen, First Parish Church United Church of Christ, Brunswick
 Martha Phillips, First Congregational United Church of Christ, Waterville
 Amy Peterson, ISAAC

Minnesota

Rev. Dr. Karen Smith Sellers, Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ, Minneapolis

Missouri

Rev. Dr. Deborah Patterson, International Parish Nurse Resource Center, St. Louis
 Sister Elizabeth Ahrens, Sisters of St. Joseph, St. Louis
 Sister Lillian Baumann, CSJ, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Saint Louis
 Sister Carol Boschert, Sisters of the Most Precious Blood, O'Fallon
 Sister Amy Hereford, Sisters of St. Joseph, St. Louis
 Katharine Kilpatric, Church Women United
 Melba V. McFadden, Kansas City Church Women United

Sister Patricia Murphy, CSJ, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Louis
 Diana Oleskevich, CSJA, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Louis Province
 DorthaMae Olsen, Church Women United
 Kathleen Reid, Adorers of the Blood of Christ, St. Louis
 Anne Silea, Lutheran Family & Children's Services

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Donna Gunn, Sacred Heart Parish and Family Center, Camden

Montana

James Gibson, Montana People's Action
 Janet Robideau, Executive Director, Montana People's Action, Missoula
 Nina Cramer, Montana People's Action

North Carolina

Rev. J. George Reed, North Carolina Council of Churches, Raleigh
 Rev. Stephen W. Camp, Southern Conference, United Church of Christ, Burlington
 Esther Megill, Church Women United
 Dr. Loise George, Church Women United

Nebraska

Carole Denton, United Methodist Church and NAMI, Grand Island
 Donna Lightbody, Christ United Methodist Church, Lincoln

Nevada

Charlotte Watkins, Lutheran Social Services of Nevada, Las Vegas

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Mr. David Lamarre-Vincent, New Hampshire Council of Churches, Pembroke

New Jersey

Rev. Dr. Dianna Hofbeck, RN, North Shore Ministry, Amish & Mennonite
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 Marilyn Russell, Faith United Church of Christ

New York

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 Marie Barker, Church Women United, Rochester
 Sister Kathleen Clancy, Port Washington
 Carol Elaine Deys, Church Women United of New York State, Inc.
 Dr. Sally Dodgson, Church Women United of Rochester
 Rev. Patrina Freeman, Church Women United of Rochester and Vicinity, Inc.
 Gail Mengel, Church Women United, New York
 Mrs. Lura Masters, Church Women United /Rochester
 Eleanor Pope, Church Women United
 Barbara Shuck, Presbyterian Church
 Mary Smith, St. John the Baptist Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order
 Sioux Taylor, Mt Vernon Church Women United
 Sister Phyllis Tierney, Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester

Jean Bartlett, Church Women United, Rochester

Ohio

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 The Rt. Rev. Thomas Breidenthal, The Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio, Cincinnati
 The Rt. Rev. Mark Hollingsworth, The Episcopal Diocese of Ohio, Cleveland
 Brenda Webster, Christian Church in Ohio, Columbus
 Rev. George Hrbek, Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry, Cleveland
 Alice Kenzig, Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine Health System, Cleveland
 Joan Brown, President, Church Women United in Ohio
 Mary Collingwood, Catholic Ministry of Health Care Professionals, Boston Heights
 Sister Mary Jean Eucker, Centering Space
 Ina Green, Church Women United in Greater Dayton
 Diane Lardie, Catholic Ministry of Health Care Professionals, Shaker Heights
 Sister Ruth Ann Patrick, Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, Richfield
 Jody Stevens, Church Women United of Zanesville, Mount Perry
 Sister Ruth Ann Patrick, Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, Richfield
 Sister Carolyn Capuano, HM, Mercy Medical Center, Canton

Oklahoma

Carol Woods, First United Methodist Church, Edmond

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David Leslie, Executive Director, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Portland

Pennsylvania

The Rev. Gary Harke, Pennsylvania Council of Churches, Harrisburg
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 Sister Marilyn Joyce, Sisters of St. Francis, Glenshaw
 MaryClaire Kennedy, Sisters of St. Joseph, NW Pennsylvania
 Sister Donna McGartland, Sisters of St. Francis, Millvale
 Sister Myron Rebel, Pittsburg
 Margaret Shields, Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary, Bryn Mawr

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 Rev. Mary Aberg, United Church of Christ, Bristol
 Rev. Beverley Edwards, Providence
 Dr. James Findlay, Kingston United Church of Christ, Peace Dale
 Warren Marble, First Congregational Church United Church of Christ, Warwick
 Rev. David Shire, Newman Congregational United Church of Christ, Emeritus, Cranston
 Barbara Silvis, Central Congregational United Church of Christ, Providence, IL, Warwick
 Ann Wood, Social Action and Justice, Barrington
 R. Jack Whitehead, Kingston Congregational Church, Kingston

South Carolina

Charles Noble, Cooperative Health Center

South Dakota

Karen Nash, First United Methodist Church

Tennessee

Kathy Jeffries, Church Women United, Tennessee

Texas

Bee Moorhead, Texas IMPACT

Mary Alice Rice, Church Women United in Houston and Texas

Coretha Loughridge, Northeast Area of the Christian Church in the Southwest, Tyler

Sister Ida Berresheim, Sisters of St. Joseph, El Paso

Sister Sylvia Chacon, Adorers of the Blood of Christ, El Paso

Mary Compton, Church Women United in Texas

Rev. Michael Mumme, Faith United Church

Charlotte Newton, United Methodist Women

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Ann W. Rasmussen, Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy Richmond

Linda Bales, General Board of Church & Society, United Methodist Church

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Sonja Lauren, The Covered Smile

Washington

Darel Grothaus, Washington Association of Churches, Seattle

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Winifred Coleman, Church Women United, Greater Seattle Unit, Seattle

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The Very Rev. Father Rubye-Lew-Huey PANG, Vicar General, The Charismatic Anglican-Catholic Church, Bellevue

Rev. Thomas Quigley, Former President Director, Church Council of Greater Seattle

Wisconsin

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Reverend Joel Deaner-Rogers, United Methodist Church, Brookfield

Grace Golata, School Sisters of St. Francis, Milwaukee

Ernabelle Madushaw, Church Women United

Rabbi Bonnie Margulis, Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, Madison

Patricia Sheehan, Church Women United

Wyoming

The Rev. Warren Murphy, Wyoming Association of Churches, Cody