

Dear Friend, Thank you for reading another edition of my weekly newsletter, the Carson Courier. For additional information on these and other topics, I encourage you to visit my website at <http://www.carson.house.gov/>.

FIGHTING TO SECURE INDIANA'S ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

You may have heard about discussions that are taking place in Congress regarding the potential passage and enactment of a second economic stimulus package. I would like to update you on some of the goals of this bill and the benefits that the Seventh Congressional District of Indiana can hopefully expect to see.

Over the last year, Indiana has suffered from skyrocketing unemployment. Today, 6.3% of Hoosiers are unemployed compared to 4.5% just one year ago. Indianapolis fares only slightly better with an unemployment rate of 5.5%. Democrats are working to assist the increasing number of unemployed Americans who are having difficulty finding work. To help these displaced workers, Congressional Democrats are advocating for the enactment of an additional 13-week extension of unemployment benefits.

Furthermore, our nation's current housing recession is adversely affecting thousands of hardworking Hoosier families. Indianapolis currently has one of the highest foreclosure rates in the country. Nearly 1 in every 250 local Marion County households is at some stage in the foreclosure process. To combat this problem, House Democrats plan to aggressively fight for a temporary moratorium on foreclosures. This temporary freeze on foreclosures would allow local homeowners to improve their financial standing and avoid defaulting on their mortgage payments.

In addition, the economic stimulus package being pushed by Congressional Democrats would also make significant investments in our nation's aging infrastructure. By devoting the necessary resources to local and state infrastructure development projects, we will improve our transportation systems while providing job opportunities to thousands of unemployed Americans.

PRIORITIZING OUR CHILDREN'S HEALTH

One of the most important challenges the new President will take on next year is the expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Plan (SCHIP). Prior to my being elected to Congress, the House and Senate twice passed a renewal of the highly successful SCHIP program, only to see both bills vetoed by President Bush. With the SCHIP program now operating under a temporary extension, the new President will have to find a way to work with Congress to renew and expand this program in order to meet the increasing needs of children from low- and middle-income families.

The state of children's health care in Indiana has also had setbacks. In 2007, Indiana passed legislation to expand eligibility for the SCHIP program from 200% of federal poverty level, or FPL, to 300%. At 200% of FPL a family of three would

have to make less than \$35,200 a year, to qualify for SCHIP. After passing the expansion legislation and obtaining a federal waiver, Indiana started the process of raising the eligibility ceiling to 300%, or \$52,800 for a family of three.

Unfortunately, at the same time Indiana was planning their expansion, the Bush Administration issued a regulation capping states eligibility at 250% of FPL and denying thousands of needy Hoosier children access to healthcare.

As your elected Representative in Congress, I am working to expand children's access to quality health services. As we continue to see the economy falter and unemployment rates rise, we are going to see an increase across the country in the number of children who are in need of health coverage.

Providing healthcare to children is a good investment in public health. Uninsured children are three times more likely to not have visited a doctor's office in the past year than insured children. When you consider that children are relatively inexpensive to insure - a child can get health insurance for about \$3 a day - it is hard to argue that this is something we cannot afford. Insured children who have regular access to healthcare are less likely to get sick and infect others, miss school, spend time in a hospital or suffer from chronic conditions like asthma, obesity and diabetes. Regular access to care also means that sick children have the chance to grow up to be healthy and productive adults - thus saving future costs of treating a chronically ill adult.

Finally, and most importantly, expanding healthcare for children is the right thing to do. My wife and I have the peace of mind of knowing that, when our young daughter gets sick, she has access to comprehensive medical care because we are both able to provide her with quality healthcare coverage through our jobs. Millions of parents in this country do not have the same luxury.

At the beginning of next year a lot of things will have changed. We will have a new President, a new Administration and the House and Senate will have many new Members. One thing that will not change will be my dedication to securing and safeguarding the health and welfare of America's children. I will continue to work hard to ensure that expanding the State Children's Health Insurance Program remains one of our nation's top priorities. I look forward to fighting on behalf of Hoosier children and for other needy children across our great nation.

Thank you for reading the Carson Courier. Please do not hesitate to contact me

with your thoughts and concerns or if I can ever be of assistance to you. I value your views and your input helps me to better represent the people of Indiana's Seventh District in Congress.