

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 44

INTRODUCED BY GALLIK, ANKNEY, BERGREN, BIXBY, CAFERRO, CAMPBELL, COBB, COONEY, DICKENSON, DRISCOLL, GALLUS, GROESBECK, HAMILTON, HANDS, HARRINGTON, HENRY, HOLLENBAUGH, W. JONES, JOPEK, KAUFMANN, KITZENBERG, KOTTEL, LARSON, LIND, MCCHESENEY, NOONAN, PARKER, RASER, RYAN, SANDS, J. TROPILA, M. TROPILA, VILLA, WANZENRIED, WEINBERG, WILLIAMS, WILMER, WILSON

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MONTANA CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM; AND URGING THE TIMELY CONGRESSIONAL REAUTHORIZATION OF FEDERAL FUNDS FOR THE PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of Montana regards the health of children to be of paramount importance to families in our state; and

WHEREAS, there are approximately 228,000 children under the age of 19 in Montana, and 37,000 children or 1 in 6 children have no health insurance; and

WHEREAS, Montana's uninsured children could stretch 28 miles if they held hands, fill 673 school buses, and form 4,111 Little League teams; and

WHEREAS, uninsured children are nearly five times more likely than insured children to have at least one delayed or unmet health care need; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of Montana regards poor child health as a threat to the educational achievement and social and psychological well-being of the children of our state; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of Montana considers protecting the health of our children to be essential to the well-being of our youngest citizens and to the quality of life in our state; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of Montana considers the Montana Children's Health Insurance Program, which insures 13,130 children a month, to be an integral part of the arrangements for health benefits for the children of the State of Montana; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of Montana recognizes the value of the Montana Children's Health Insurance Program in preserving child wellness, preventing and treating childhood disease, improving health outcomes, and reducing overall health costs; and

WHEREAS, insurance costs consume 32% of the median family income in Montana for a family of four;

and

WHEREAS, 83% of Montanans polled in a January 2007 Lee Newspaper poll supported the expansion of the state Children's Health Insurance Program; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of Montana considers the federal funding available for the state Children's Health Insurance Program to be indispensable for providing health benefits for children of modest means.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

(1) That the Legislature of the State of Montana urge the members of Montana's Delegation to the United States Congress to ensure that Congress timely reauthorize the Montana Children's Health Insurance Program to ensure federal funding for the state Children's Health Insurance Program.

(2) That the Legislature of the State of Montana urge the Governor to use the Governor's best efforts to work with Montana's Congressional Delegation to ensure that the state Children's Health Insurance Program is reauthorized in a timely manner.

(3) That the Legislature of the State of Montana proclaim that all components of state government should work together with educators, health care providers, social workers, and parents to ensure that all available public and private assistance for providing health benefits to uninsured children in this state be used to the maximum extent possible.

(4) That the Legislature of the State of Montana urge the Governor to use the Governor's best efforts to provide meaningful assistance to help identify and enroll children who qualify for Medicaid or the Montana Children's Health Insurance Program.

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