

WASHINGTON, DC- Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) released the following statement today in recognition of “Cover the Uninsured Week.”

“On Monday, President Bush again offered Health Savings Accounts as a remedy for America’s health care crisis. Ironically, his remarks came on the same day that marked the beginning of ‘Cover the Uninsured Week.’ The fact that there are 46 million uninsured Americans today, including over 1 million Marylanders, is simply unacceptable. The President’s narrow focus on Health Savings Accounts shows that Republicans have no plan to help the uninsured.

“Indeed, the Republican response to covering the uninsured seems to stop at HSAs, which will undermine traditional group insurance and discourage American families from seeking important preventative care. The result has been 6 million more uninsured Americans in just the last five years.

“To make matters worse, the Republican budget passed at the end of last year slashed Medicaid funding by \$7 billion, which would have a severe impact on the 752,065 children, seniors and others in Maryland who rely on Medicaid for their health care. Among its cuts, the budget allowed states to charge premiums and co-payments to some Medicaid-eligible children for the first time – reducing their access to health care.

“Low-income families and children rely on this assistance for their health and well being. Meanwhile, the Republican budget plan provided \$106 billion in new tax cuts, mostly for the wealthiest Americans. These are the wrong priorities for our state and nation.

“The number of uninsured in this country remains a stain on the conscience of our federal government. I am a proud co-sponsor of the Small Business Health Insurance Promotion Act, a bill to provide tax subsidies that encourage small employers to offer affordable health coverage to their employees through qualified health pooling arrangements. I also support other measures to provide health care coverage to millions more Americans.

“On this week, we should recommit ourselves to providing every hard working American with the care necessary to stay healthy and prosper.”

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