

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) released the following statement today after President Bush vetoed bipartisan legislation that would provide health insurance to 10 million children through the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The bill would extend health insurance to 4 million children, including 42,000 in the State of Maryland, who currently are eligible through the CHIP program but who do not receive coverage due to a lack of funding:

“The President's incomprehensible veto of this bipartisan, fiscally responsible legislation – which is supported by strong majorities in the House and Senate, 43 governors, industry groups and the American people – not only violates his own campaign promise in 2004, but also demonstrates a stunning lack of compassion for some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

“After enacting policies that instigated record budget deficits and debt over the last six and one-half years, the President should not try to establish his fiscal bonafides and pander to his conservative political base by denying health insurance to millions of poor American children. Nor should the President be dispensing lectures on fiscal responsibility given his track record since 2001 and the fact that he now is asking the American people to spend another \$190 billion on Iraq.

“In the days ahead, the House of Representatives will attempt to override the President's unjustified veto. We will work to persuade the large number of our Republican colleagues, including Congressman Roscoe Bartlett, who insist on standing with the President to instead join the bipartisan majorities in both chambers – and America's children – in overriding this veto.”

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