

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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****FACT SHEET ATTACHED**

**STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY ON THE STATE
CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM AGREEMENT**

WASHINGTON, DC— Today, Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, released the following statement on the agreement between the United States Senate and House of Representatives on the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

“CHIP has made access to health care possible for millions of America's neediest children, and given them the opportunity for a healthy start in life. It's a successful program and should not be a partisan issue. Ten years ago when Senator Hatch and I created the program, we put politics aside to put children first. This Administration has failed on healthcare and our children are paying the price. This bill will allow children to get the quality healthcare they deserve, and should be signed into law before the program expires next week. After watching hundreds of thousands of children lose their health coverage on his watch, it would be callous and cruel of the President to veto a measure that brings hope to millions of children. Today's agreement between the House and the Senate is a positive step forward, and I urge President Bush to listen to the American people and sign the bill into law.”

Massachusetts SCHIP Fact Sheet

- There are currently 112,000 children in Massachusetts that have no insurance
- Massachusetts currently has 90,500 children enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program
 - They are currently enrolled at up to 300% of the federal poverty level (\$61,950 for family of four)
- Under the bill, Massachusetts will receive an estimated \$304.8 million in fiscal year 2008
 - The Commonwealth needs \$277 million to take care of the 90,500 children currently enrolled in SCHIP for 2008.
- With the current compromise version of the bill, Massachusetts could cover as many as 27,400 children who are now uninsured over the next five years.

- If Congress does nothing before September 30th and allows the program to expire without providing any funds, the Commonwealth is out of money as of OCTOBER 1st

From poll conducted by Children's Hospital in Boston-

- Nearly 7 in 10 Mass. voters (69%) want Congress to provide enough funding to expand CHIP. Only 7% would favor keeping funding at current levels, which would result in dropping children from the program.
- Massachusetts voters reject the argument that there are other more important funding priorities and they disagree that cutting taxes should take precedence over children's health. About three quarters of voters reject both these arguments, including majorities of Republicans, Independents and Democrats, as well as voters from all income levels.

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