

March of Dimes Foundation

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The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Finance
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Finance
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Hatch and Ranking Member Wyden,

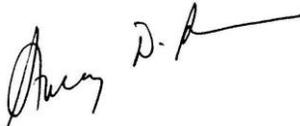
On behalf of the March of Dimes, a unique collaboration of scientists, clinicians, parents, members of the business community, and other volunteers representing every state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, I am pleased to offer our support for S. 1827, the Keeping Kids' Insurance Dependable and Secure (KIDS) Act.

Created in 1997, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) is an outstanding example of the policy success that can come from bipartisan cooperation. CHIP enables states to provide quality, affordable coverage for approximately 9 million children across our nation. As a result of efforts under CHIP, Medicaid and other programs, more than 95 percent of all children in the U.S. currently have some form of health insurance coverage. In addition, 19 states also cover pregnant women under CHIP, removing barriers to pregnancy coverage and prenatal care for about 370,000 women each year. These states provide critical coverage to pregnant women who otherwise would likely have no source of insurance and great difficulty accessing care.

CHIP has enjoyed strong support from both sides of the aisle throughout its existence, and S. 1827, the KIDS Act, continues that tradition. The KIDS Act would extend the CHIP program for five years, giving families the peace of mind that their children will continue to receive vital coverage. The five-year extension also gives states the stability and predictability needed to pursue long-term contracts, plan innovative efforts, and administer the program consistently.

The March of Dimes is deeply troubled that Congress has failed to extend CHIP funding before its expiration on September 30. We urge all Senators to support S. 1827 so that it can be passed by both chambers and signed into law as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,



Stacey D. Stewart
President