



April 9, 2007

The Honorable Max Baucus
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-2602

The Honorable John D. Rockefeller, IV
United States Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-4802

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
United States Senate
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-1501

The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch
United States Senate
104 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-4402

Dear Senators Baucus, Rockefeller, Grassley and Hatch:

Ten years ago Republicans and Democrats joined together to create one of the most successful policy initiatives in recent history. The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) has reduced the number of uninsured children in the United States by one-third and helped spark a broad grassroots movement to improve children's health. Now Congress has the opportunity to finish the job for America's children by strengthening SCHIP.

For the PICO National Network's more than 1,000 congregations, the top priority this year is advancing strong SCHIP reauthorization legislation consistent with PICO's Road Map for Covering All Children by 2012. PICO's Road Map includes three important improvements to SCHIP.

(1) Financial incentives and support to encourage states to enroll and retain eligible children. To cover all children we need to reward, not punish states that enroll more children. Express-lane eligibility and a financing structure that provides additional funding to states as they approach full-enrollment, are critical changes needed to make sure we reach and retain the millions of children who are already eligible for coverage.

(2) Continued support for states that are moving to increase eligibility. As it becomes increasingly difficult for working families to obtain health coverage through their employers, many states are offering families the opportunity to obtain affordable

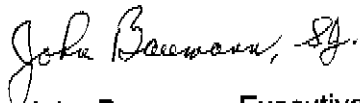
coverage through their SCHIP programs. States that cover children above 200 percent of poverty and those that are moving to do so are located in many different regions of the United States. SCHIP reauthorization needs to support these state initiatives that provide families with choices for their children.

(3) Giving states the option to cover pregnant women and documented immigrant children. As part of SCHIP reauthorization Congress should clarify the ability of states to cover pregnant women in their SCHIP programs and restore the option to states to provide federally-supported coverage to documented immigrant children.

Now that Congress has passed a budget resolution that includes an additional \$50 billion for SCHIP reauthorization, PICO's faith communities urge Congress to proceed with speed to reauthorize the program. Most states in the nation have initiatives underway to reduce the number of uninsured children. The federal government needs to act quickly to give states and their governors the ability to plan and move forward.

As part of PICO's Cover all Children campaign (www.coverallchildren.org) our faith-based federations will be working at the national level over the next three months to see that SCHIP is strengthened and reauthorized and at the state level to help our states continue to move forward on expanding coverage. We look forward to working closely with you to make sure that the voices of families and the faith community are heard in the reauthorization process.

Sincerely,



Fr. John Baumann, Executive Director
PICO National Network

PICO Member Federations

ACTION Network, Gainesville, FL
All Congregations Together, New Orleans, LA
Anchorage Faith & Action - Congregations Together, Anchorage, AK
Baldwin County ACT II, Fairhope, AL
Bayou Interfaith Shared Community Organizing, Thibodaux, LA
Berkeley Organizing Congregations for Action, Berkeley, CA
Camden Churches Organized for People, Camden, NJ
Central Brooklyn Churches, Brooklyn, NY
Community Action Project, Brooklyn, NY
Community Voice L.A., Los Angeles, CA
Congregations and Schools Empowered, Glenwood Springs, CO
Congregations Building Community, Windsor, CO
Congregations Building Community, Modesto, CA
Congregations for Civic Action, Escondido, CA
Congregations for Community Action, Melbourne, FL
Congregations Organizing for Renewal, Hayward, CA
Congregations United for Neighborhood Action, Allentown, PA
Contra Costa County Interfaith Supporting Community Organization, Martinez, CA
East Bakersfield Faith Community Alliance, Bakersfield, CA
Eastern Pennsylvania Organizing Project, Philadelphia, PA

Essex County Community Organization, Lynn, MA
Faith in Community, Fresno, CA
Federation of Congregations United to Serve (FOCUS), Orlando, FL
Flint Area Congregations Together, Flint, MI
Hope Ministries-Pointe Coupee Parish, LA
Greater Long Beach Interfaith Community Organization, Long Beach, CA
Greater Pensacola Community Organization, Pensacola, FL
Inland Congregations United for Change, San Bernardino, CA
Interfaith Action, Rochester, NY
Kansas City Church Community Organization, Kansas City, MO
Metro Organizations for People, Denver, CO
Metropolitan Interfaith Congregations Acting for Hope, Framingham, MA
North Valley Sponsoring Committee, Sacramento, CA
Oakland Community Organizations, Oakland, CA
Orange County Congregation-Community Organization, Anaheim, CA
Peninsula Interfaith Action, San Carlos, CA
People Acting in Community Together, San Jose, CA
People And Congregations Together, Stockton, CA
PICO California, Sacramento, CA
PICO Colorado, Denver, CO
PICO Louisiana Interfaith Together, Baton Rouge, LA
PICO Massachusetts Communities Action Network, Boston, MA
Queens Congregations United for Action, Corona, NY
Sacramento Area Congregations Together, Sacramento, CA
San Diego Organizing Project, San Diego, CA
San Francisco Organizing Project, San Francisco, CA
Tri-County Congregational Organizing, Camden, NJ
United Interfaith Action, Fall River, MA
Vermont Interfaith Action, Burlington, VT
Working Interfaith Network, Baton Rouge, LA