

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell today voted to make a critical investment in children's health care and prevent 6.6 million children from losing their benefits at the end of September.

With Mitchell's support, the House approved the Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act (CHAMP) and reauthorized the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) by a 225 to 204 vote.

"Our children and grandchildren are our nation's most important assets," said Mitchell. "As a teacher, I know how kids without adequate health care miss too many days of school and have to resort to going to the emergency room. This legislation is an important step forward."

SCHIP also provides health insurance to 5 million children who are eligible but not currently enrolled, boosting the number of children covered by SCHIP to more than 11 million.

SCHIP provides funding for Arizona's KidsCare, which provides health insurance for more than 41,000 children in Maricopa County. If Congress fails to reauthorize SCHIP, the consequences would be serious: the 41,000 children in Maricopa County and approximately 6.6 million children across the country would lose their current health insurance.

The nation's governors, including Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano, have stressed how important SCHIP is to states like Arizona. Napolitano told the Associated Press, "The governors have been very firm that SCHIP is their No. 1 health care priority at the federal level." [Source: [Associated Press](#), July 23, 2007]

Earlier this week, the Arizona Daily Star urged Congress to pass SCHIP, opining, "It is unconscionable to allow SCHIP to expire and deprive any child who needs health insurance based on an ideological theory that ignores the economic realities of American life." [Source: [Arizona Daily Star](#), July 30, 2007]

CHAMP also makes important improvements to Medicare and protects it from privatization. It ensures Medicare patients' access to the doctor of their choosing, eliminates co-payments and deductibles for many preventative services, phases out overpayments to private plans and extends Medicare's solvency. CHAMP also expands the federal subsidy program for low-income Medicare beneficiaries, eliminates the penalty for those enrolling late in the Medicare Part D drug program, and requires that the poorest Medicare beneficiaries enroll in prescription drug plans that cover 95 percent of the cost of the 100 most commonly-used drugs.

H.R. 3162 is partially offset by raising the federal tobacco tax by 45 cents a pack, which would result in \$53.8 billion in revenue over the next 10 years.