

[The Arizona Republic](#)

Harry Mitchell

Regarding "Powerful facts about SCHIP" (Letters, Sunday):

We have a children's health-care crisis in our country. In Arizona, approximately 250,000 children - nearly one in five - do not have access to health insurance. How we solve this crisis is important and worthy of honest debate.

The State Children's Health Insurance Program provides funding for states to decide how to best address local health-care needs. In Arizona, SCHIP funds KidsCare, which currently helps 65,000 of Arizona's poorest children secure health insurance.

[I recently voted for](#) , and Congress passed, bipartisan legislation to extend coverage to 81,000 more Arizona children through SCHIP. Unfortunately, President Bush vetoed the bill.

Recently, SCHIP opponents have used misleading information to scare others into falsely believing the current legislation is designed to shift upper middle-class children from private insurance to SCHIP.

Speaking on the House floor, my colleague Rep. John Shadegg [inaccurately claimed](#) that every new child covered through SCHIP would drop his or her private insurance. Specifically, he said the bipartisan bill "will produce one person dropping private insurance for every one person who gets SCHIP insurance." Earlier this month, I told The Republic that the false claim was a "phony argument" and "scare tactic." I stand by my words.

The [Congressional Budget Office reported](#) that, of the additional 6 million children who would become eligible by 2012 through the bipartisan legislation, a whopping 4 million would otherwise go uninsured. The CBO also reports that 3.5 million of those children meet the states' current coverage criteria but that there are not adequate resources to cover them. This legislation fixes that.

As public servants, I believe we have an obligation to help inform as well as advocate, and the use of inaccurate and misleading information does not contribute to honest debate.