

Altmire Statement on White House Action to Limit Health Care for Children

(Washington, DC) - Today, U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-4) issued the following statement on the House's attempt to override the president's veto of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) legislation. A report issued by the Joint Economic Committee yesterday found that worsening economic conditions such as the ones currently affecting the country have traditionally increased the demand for SCHIP. It is estimated that as many as an additional one million children nationwide, including over 36,000 in Pennsylvania, will need to enroll in SCHIP or Medicaid to get health care coverage in the next year.

In August, the Administration imposed drastic new restrictions on states' ability to provide health insurance to children by limiting the incomes of families who qualify for assistance at 250 percent above the poverty line, approximately \$43,000 for a family of three. This move came in stark contrast to the Administration's prior approval in February of Pennsylvania's request to expand coverage to families at 300 percent above the poverty line, approximately \$51,500 for a family of three. By failing to override the president's veto today, House Republicans ensured these damaging restrictions would remain in place, which could result in tens of thousands of children losing their health care coverage in the coming months.

The House failed to override the president's veto today by a vote of 260-152, 15 short of the 275 required.

"Over the past weeks, I have heard from countless western Pennsylvania parents who are finding that a sluggish economy, high gas prices, and stagnant wages are making it harder than ever to afford basic health care for their families. Averting a recession should start today and it should start by providing 10 million kids with the health care they need to become strong, healthy adults.

"With a host of economic stresses facing America's working families today, the failure to override the president's veto and provide health insurance for the millions of children who will otherwise go without defies common sense.

"Now tens of thousands of Pennsylvania's kids could lose health care coverage through the SCHIP program in the coming months, creating another economic burden for our families at the time when they can least afford it."