



# COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

## **HUNDREDS OF STATE AND COMMUNITY GROUPS WANT CONGRESS TO VOTE FOR CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND HUMAN NEEDS**

STATEMENT BY DEBORAH WEINSTEIN,  
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Yesterday, hundreds of organizations in 12 states asked their federal delegations to override the President's veto of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), and to support investments in their communities through federal appropriations. The states, which together include over half the country's population, include California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Their letters, including the names of the organizations, are posted on the website of the Coalition of Human Needs, which coordinated the letters (<http://www.chn.org/SCHIPApropsinfo.html>). The signers include religious organizations, service providers, United Ways, YWCA's, and many other agencies rooted in their communities and serving millions of people.

Congress is scheduled to vote to override the presidential veto of SCHIP on Thursday, October 18. Should Congress override the veto, 3.8 million more children will have health insurance, and regular access to health care. If the president's veto is allowed to stand, hundreds of thousands of children now served will lose their health insurance. The Congressional Budget Office found that nearly all the 3.8 million children who would benefit from this legislation are low-income children who are eligible under current laws but not enrolled.

Also critically important to low-income and struggling families, the Senate is expected to vote this week on the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill. The House has already passed its version, providing modest but important improvements in education, nutrition, housing, and health care. The President has promised to veto this legislation too, and insists on a seventh straight year of cuts. The letters urge Congress to enact bills that start to rebuild and invest, and to reject the President's vetoes.

In the communities where the signers of these letters live and work, the cumulative impact of cuts in has been severe. Hundreds of thousands of children have lost access to subsidized child care and Head Start, a hundred and fifty thousand fewer families have assistance in paying for rent, hundreds of thousands of families no longer get help with their skyrocketing utility bills. Families have been losing the opportunity to get ahead provided by education and services. They have lost protections from hard times. It is time to begin to restore some of the essential services that have been lost.