

From: Colorado Center on Law and Policy [sdownes@cclponline.org]

Sent: Friday, November 09, 2007 2:17 PM

To: Scott Downes

Subject: CCLP's Policy Matters

November 2007

CCLP's Policy Matters

Colorado Center on Law and Policy/Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute

In This Issue

- Congress passes, President vetoes SCHIP legislation
- Poverty Day 2007
- House passes Farm Bill; Invests in Food Stamp Program
- Colorado implements new "Lawful Presence" Rules

CCLP Quick Info

- What's New at CCLP
- CCLP In the News
- About CCLP
- Support CCLP

Event Alert

- Budget Works 2008
Friday, January 4th Save the Date!

Join our mailing list!

Congress passes, President vetoes SCHIP legislation

Health care advocates urge more congressional action

Few issues carry as much importance as providing children with health insurance, particularly since Colorado has 7th highest rate of uninsured kids in the country.

In September, both the U.S. House and Senate passed their respective State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) Reauthorization packages with strong bipartisan support. Colorado's Congressional delegation split along party lines with all Democrats voting in favor of SCHIP reauthorization packages and all Republicans voting against.

The President fulfilled his promise to veto the bill in early October, after which the House fell 13 votes short of overriding the veto. The President and other opponents of the SCHIP legislation repeatedly made false claims about what the bill actually does, such as that it would give wealthy families health insurance and allow undocumented immigrants access to free health care. In fact, the bill did none of these things.

The bill does nothing to raise eligibility levels beyond current standards. All it would really do is help more poor children get access to health insurance that don't have it now. Likewise, the new legislation would just give states the option of using two different ways to confirm citizenship of beneficiaries. Undocumented immigrants have never been eligible for SCHIP benefits. This bill doesn't change that.

In late October, the House passed another SCHIP bill which addressed concerns of opponents. Despite the strong bipartisan support, that vote fell just short of a veto-proof majority.

While some opinion-makers are calling out for a compromise, the bottom line is that this legislation helps more poor children get access to health insurance who don't have it now, including 60,000 kids right here in Colorado-keeping them healthy and keeping health care costs lower. That's not something we should have to compromise

Find out more about the SCHIP legislation and what's next in Congress.

Poverty Day 2007

Good News, Bad News on Poverty, Income, Health Care

In late August, the U.S. Census Bureau released new data showing that nearly a half million Coloradans, or 10.6 percent, struggle with poverty and that the state's child poverty rate has increased to 15.3 percent. Statewide data also showed that median household income declined slightly from the previous year, and that 16.6 percent of Coloradans are uninsured, which is higher than the national rate.

"The fact remains that far too many Colorado families are struggling to make ends meet on a daily basis," said Kathy White, Project Coordinator of the Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute. "In the fifth year of an economic recovery, advances have been too slow and poverty levels remain too high."

Perhaps the most troubling finding was that Colorado was the only state in the country where child poverty is increasing.

Keep in mind also that the Federal Poverty Line is not a realistic measurement of what a working family needs to be self-sufficient and to meet their most basic needs, in part because the FPL only factors the cost of food. The Colorado Self-Sufficiency Standard is much more accurate because it is a bare-bones budget that accounts for the basic needs of housing, food, child care, health care, transportation, miscellaneous costs, and taxes, on a county-by-county basis. CCLP is currently developing a web-based calculator for individuals, non-profits, social service agencies and others to realistically assess true self-sufficiency levels and what kind of assistance is required as a result.

For more details about the Census data, check out the full press release.

House passes Farm Bill; Invests in Food Stamp Program

Advocates urge quick action in the Senate

This summer, the U.S. House passed its version of the 2007 Farm Bill. In addition to agriculture, conservation and trade issues, the Farm Bill also reauthorizes the Food Stamp Program making \$4 billion in critical new investments and much needed improvements in food stamp benefits and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). This is an important first step that will better address the problem of hunger in Colorado and around the country.

The Food Stamp Program is the first line of defense against hunger in Colorado, providing almost 251,385 needy Coloradans with an average of \$1.19 per person per meal to buy food every month. It is also the country's single biggest nutrition program for poor children. In Colorado, 58 percent of food stamp benefits go to households with children. The program also serves 16,809 elderly Coloradans and 17,715 Colorado households that include a person with a disability.

What this legislation does: -Stops cuts in food stamp purchasing power
-Increases minimum benefits for the elderly and people with disabilities -
Allows families to deduct child care costs -Removes the savings
disincentive from the Food Stamp Program

Now the Farm Bill awaits action in the Senate, which could come as soon as this week

For more details check out the Farm Bill Fact sheet.

Colorado implements new "Lawful Presence" Rules

for those trying to access life-sustaining public benefits, as well as new ID rules for those needing to obtain a Colorado ID for all other purposes

As of August 1, 2007, the Colorado Department of Revenue issued, and the Division of Motor Vehicles began implementing, revised rules for Lawful Presence. Likewise, new State ID and Drivers' Licenses rules were issued as well.

The new lawful presence rules allow persons applying for public benefits to use a broad list of documents to prove lawful presence (citizenship or lawful immigrant status). They also allow applicants for public benefits to request Waivers if they do not have any of the acceptable documents. This change was necessary to ensure that citizens and lawful immigrants who need such benefits could actually get them.

[Department of Revenue Fact Sheet](#)

[Division of Motor Vehicles Rule](#)

[Lawful Presence Rule Summary](#)

[Complete Department of Revenue Rule](#)

Promotions

Aiming for the Middle

If you have not read about it already, be sure to check out the most recent Colorado Fiscal Policy report, [Aiming for the Middle](#), which lays out how Colorado is falling woefully behind in funding for vital public services like health care, transportation, schools, and higher education.

SAVE THE DATE! Budget Works 2008

SAVE THE DATE! Budget Works 2008 will be held on Friday, January 4, 2008 at the Colorado History Museum from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

Stay tuned for more information or visit www.cclponline.org.

Colorado Health Foundation Grant

The Colorado Health Foundation recently awarded CCLP three-year \$675,000 grant. The grant is aimed at strengthening and supporting CCLP's ongoing work to improve access to affordable and quality health care for all Coloradans, particularly for lower- income Coloradans.

The grant will expand the Health Care program staff from one permanent and one temporary employee to three permanent employees. Likewise, it will allow CCLP to expand its work on health care reform, influence changes to the Medicaid documentation requirements in the Deficit Reduction Act, expand access for the State Children's Health Insurance Program, and continue working with state agencies and the Colorado legislature to protect and expand access to affordable health care.

Event Update

This summer, CCLP hosted a young professional's reception at Milagro Taco Bar with special guest, State Treasurer Cary Kennedy. The Treasurer gave a terrific talk about some of the budget and fiscal challenges that Colorado is facing. The event also yielded more than thirty new individual CCLP donors.

In October, CCLP hosted an important issue briefing called "On the Road to Health Care Reform," with special guest Insurance Commission Marcy Morrison, and a health care presentation by Elisabeth Arenales and Liz Feder.

Colorado Center on Law and Policy

email: sdownes@cclponline.org

phone: 303-573-5669

web: <http://www.cclponline.org>

[Forward email](#)

SafeUnsubscribe®

This email was sent to nhecox@cclponline.org, by sdownes@cclponline.org
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Email Marketing by



Colorado Center on Law and Policy | 727 E. 16th Ave, Main Suite | Denver | CO | 80203