

Hon. Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator  
713 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Brown:

Thank you for your public commitment to securing a four-year extension of the bipartisan Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), as part of the Medicare package currently being negotiated in Congress. We stand ready to work with and support you in this important effort.

Your stand protects a bipartisan success story, sending states a strong message that the federal government remains committed to health coverage that works for children and families. It also promotes work by providing greater health security for working families, ensuring that a mom's starting a new job or dad's starting a small business won't make the children uninsured. And it gives Congress a realistic opportunity to ensure that comparable coverage options are available before CHIP sunsets.

Your position also gives governors and advocates what they asked for. When key congressional committees solicited input from governors on CHIP last year, the majority of governors who responded – 14 Democrats and 10 Republicans – asked for CHIP extensions of four years or more. And just a month ago, more than 1,500 advocates signed a letter urging congressional leadership – twice – to deliver a four-year extension. In addition to [advocates from every state](#), that includes a unified children's community: the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Children's Hospital Association, Children's Defense Fund, the Children's Dental Health Project, the March of Dimes, and so many others.

Your position also gives House Democrats what they want. The Democratic budget alternative, which is expected to garner universal support among House Democrats today, would extend CHIP for four years.

Your position also moves the legislation toward a more equitable allocation of health care resources. In a typical year, Congress invest just 10 percent of federal funding in children. The House bill's two-year CHIP extension allocates just 2.7 percent of its funding to children.

The fact that the House did not deliver a stronger investment in children does not mean the debate is over. The framers created a bicameral legislature for an important reason. The Senate must work its will before this debate ends, and your leadership creates a unique opportunity to deliver what children need.

Bruce Lesley



President  
First Focus Campaign for Children