

(Washington D.C.) - Congressman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (D-VA-03) today voted in favor of H.R. 3162, the Children's Healthcare and Medicare Protection (CHAMP) Act of 2007. The CHAMP Act re-authorizes the State Children's Health Insurance Plan (SCHIP), which now provides health insurance to 6 million children in America who would otherwise be uninsured.

"Today, the U.S. House of Representatives took a positive step in the direction of covering all of our nation's children with health insurance. This re-authorization ensures that 800,000 children currently covered by SCHIP are not dropped from the program and provides the resources needed to cover 5 million more children who do not have coverage. This is a good first step, but we need to do more," said Rep. Scott. "The next steps are to provide coverage for the 4 million children who will still lack coverage after this bill becomes law, and to provide all children with more comprehensive coverage."

The CHAMP Act uses bonus funding to encourage states to enact many optional provisions in their state health insurance programs. Although this is a good start, these provisions should be mandatory in order to provide more comprehensive coverage. These optional provisions include the coverage of low-income pregnant women, streamlining of the eligibility process, and a 12-month continual enrollment period. "Ideally the CHAMP Act would have made these provisions mandatory. The bill should have also provided the option for families who are just above the current income threshold to buy into SCHIP," said Rep. Scott.

"While I am pleased that we have made progress with the CHAMP Act, I am troubled with the increase of the Federal Excise Tax on Tobacco that was used to pay for it," Congressman Scott said. "This is a regressive tax that disproportionately affects low-income individuals, and it is unfortunate that we would need to raise these taxes in the same year that we have cut taxes for the wealthiest Americans."

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