

December 12, 2007

Dear Senator,

We the undersigned organizations urge you to oppose legislative proposals that are based on misinformation related to the use of federal funding for undocumented immigrants. We call upon Congress to stand up to public attacks on hard-working immigrant families.

We also ask Congress to support equity in access to publicly-funded services for newly-arrived, lawfully-residing immigrants. Currently, most of these immigrants are barred during their first five years in the U.S. from the rights, privileges, and benefits that U.S. citizens and a few other immigrants have.

We ask Members of Congress to rebut the false allegations that undocumented immigrant children would receive coverage under the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) of 2007. Undocumented children have never been eligible for SCHIP or other federal public benefits. Members, the public and the media who advance such falsehoods are using this red herring for political gain, and are deceiving the electorate as well as their Congressional colleagues. Members who do not oppose such demagoguery contribute to the attacks on immigrant children and their parents, and promote divisiveness among the nation's communities.

We are dismayed that this Congress, surrendering to anti-immigrant forces, added gratuitous provisions trumpeting the fact that needy undocumented children and pregnant women receive no help from CHIPRA. We also deplore the proposed extension to SCHIP of the disastrous 2005 Medicaid citizenship documentation requirement. This requirement has wasted millions of taxpayers' dollars and prevented hundreds of thousands of U.S. citizens from obtaining health care.¹ It undermines the goal of insuring more children, yet with each renegotiation of SCHIP this year, Congress has tightened the ill-conceived restriction further, aiming for partisan political gain at the expense of the families in need.

This Congress also has failed to advance health care for lawfully residing immigrant children and pregnant women. In blocking the inclusion of the Legal Immigrant Children's Health Improvement Act (ICHIA) in CHIPRA, Congress is squandering a critical, long-awaited opportunity to improve health care for a vulnerable group of children who were arbitrarily left without access to Medicaid and SCHIP more than a decade ago. Passage of ICHIA would redress the inequity that bars legal immigrant children and pregnant women from eligibility for SCHIP and Medicaid during their first five years in the U.S. Without removal of this five-year bar, lawfully residing children and pregnant women are denied prenatal and other preventive health care despite their family's payment of taxes that support these important programs. Congress abandons "family values" when it ignores pregnant women and children who lack the means to purchase affordable health coverage. ICHIA is necessary to address this inequity that falls most heavily on low-income communities of color.

The Congressional session is not yet over. We call upon Congress to find a way to pass ICHIA and to return honesty, realism, and integrity to the debate on health care. Stop the endorsement of gratuitous and divisive anti-immigrant provisions, and enact responsible policies, such as ICHIA, that help low-income immigrant children and their parents.

¹ U.S. General Accounting Office: Medicaid: States Reported That Citizenship Documentation Requirement Resulted in Enrollment Declines for Eligible Citizens and Posed Administrative Burdens, June 2007.
<http://oversight.house.gov/documents/20070724110408.pdf>.

For more information, please contact Dinah Wiley, Public Benefits Policy Attorney, National Immigration Law Center, wiley@nilc-dc.org.

Sincerely,
(Lists in formation)

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

9to5, National Association of Working Women
AFL-CIO
African American Health Alliance (AAHA)
African Immigrant & Refugee Foundation
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Friends Service Committee
Americans for Democratic Action
American Orthopsychiatric Association
Asian American Justice Center
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Asian Pacific Islander Caucus for Public Health
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Center for Community Change
Center for Medicare Advocacy
Church Women United
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Coalition on Human Needs
Democratic Socialists of America
Daughters of Wisdom, U.S. Province
Disciples Justice Action Network (Disciples of Christ)
Enlace
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Fair Immigration Reform Movement
First Focus
GABRIELA Network
Grassroots America
Gray Panthers
Hmong National Development
Immunization Action Coalition
Institute for Peace and Justice
Institute of Social Medicine and Community Health
Ipas
Irish Apostolate USA
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
Legal Momentum
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
Migrant Clinicians Network
Mothers Movement Online
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Association of Social Workers
National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence
National Center for Law and Economic Justice
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza
National Council of Women's Organizations
National Health Law Program
National Immigrant Solidarity Network
National Immigration Law Center
National Institute for Reproductive Health
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association
National Organization for Women (NOW)
National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault
National Priorities Project
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
National Federation of Filipino American Associations
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Organization of Chinese Americans
OWL – The Voice of Midlife and Older Women
Pacific Islander Council of Leaders
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Pride At Work AFL-CIO
Progressive Grandparents
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition (REHDC)
Reproductive Health Access Project
RESULTS
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
South Asian American Leaders of Tomorrow (SAALT)
Southeast Asian Resource Action Center

Stop Family Violence
Summit Health Institute for Research and Education
The Workmen's Circle/Arbiter Ring
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian-Universalist Society
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

United Food and Commercial Workers International
Union
United for Peace and Justice
USAction
Wider Opportunities for Women
Xaverian Brothers U.S.A.

STATE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

ALABAMA

Alabama Appleseed
Alabama Latin American Association
Alabama NOW
Latinos Unidos De Alabama

ALASKA

American Federation of Government Employees,
AFL-CIO, Local 3937
Hispanic Affairs Council of Alaska
HIV/AIDS Services for African Americans in Alaska

ARIZONA

Advocate Initiatives for Grassroots Access
Arizona Advocacy Network
Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Grand Canyon Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church
in America
Mission & Outreach Team, First Congregational
United Church of Christ, Phoenix

ARKANSAS

Arkansas Hunger Coalition
Omni Center for Peace, Justice and Ecology

CALIFORNIA

African Immigrant & Refugee Resource Center
Alameda Health Consortium
Allianza LatinoAmericana para los Derechos de los
Inmigrantes (ALDI)
AltaMed Health Services
American Civil Liberties Union of Southern
California
Asian Law Alliance
Asian Pacific American Legal Center
Bay Area Immigrant Rights Coalition
Immaculate Heart Community
Catholic Charities, Diocese of Stockton
California Food Policy Advocates
California Immigrant Policy Center
California NCJW
California NOW
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
California Partnership

California Primary Care Association
Central Valley Partnership for Citizenship
Centro Legal De La Raza, Oakland
Chinese for Affirmative Action
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los
Angeles
International Institute of the Bay Area
Lifelong Medical Care
Los Amigos of Orange County
Los Angeles Indigenous Peoples' Alliance
Mount Saint Joseph-Saint Elizabeth
National Lawyers Guild, San Francisco Bay Area
Chapter
North East Medical Services
Orange County Community Housing Corp/Stepping
UP
Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church, San Diego
Organizing Project
Parent Voices
Protection & Advocacy, Inc.
Saint Gabriel Peace & Justice Organization
San Ysidro Health Center
Tri-City Health Care
United for Peace and Justice Bay Area

COLORADO

Colorado Center on Law and Policy
Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition
Colorado NOW
Colorado Progressive Coalition
Cross Community Coalition Family Resource Center,
Denver
H.S. Power & Light
San Miguel/West Montrose Adult Education

CONNECTICUT

Collaborative Center for Justice
Community Health Center, Inc.
Connecticut Immigrant and Refugee Coalition
Connecticut Legal Services
Connecticut NCJW
Connecticut Call To Action

Greater Hartford Legal Aid
Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut
New Haven Legal Assistance Association
United Action of Connecticut

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

African Resource Center
Pax Christi Metro DC

FLORIDA

Center for Independent Living of South Florida
Diocese of St. Augustine, Florida, Justice and Peace
Commission
Florida Consumer Action Network
Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center
Florida Legal Services, Inc.
Hispanic Coalition, Corp.

GEORGIA

Georgia Rural Urban Summit

HAWAII

Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence
YWCA Hawaii Island

IDAHO

American Federation of Government Employees,
AFL-CIO, Local 3937
Idaho Community Action Network

ILLINOIS

Chicago Medical-Legal Partnership for Children
Citizen Action/Illinois
Griffin Center
Health & Disability Advocates
Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human
Rights
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition
Lutheran Advocacy – Illinois
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois
Women's Business Development Center of Chicago
YWCA Aurora

INDIANA

Jewish Community Relations Council
Social Concerns Ministry of St. Thomas Aquinas
Catholic Church - Perdue

IOWA

Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence

KANSAS

Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic
Violence

KENTUCKY

Kentucky Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee
Rights

LOUISIANA

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge

MAINE

Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project
Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence
Maine Labor Council for Latin American
Advancement

MASSACHUSETTS

Berkshire Immigrant Center
Community Aid Committee of Church of St. Andrew
Family Equality Council
Hyde Square Task Force
Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and
Domestic Violence
Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy
Coalition (MIRA)
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Massachusetts NOW
Total Assistance, Inc.
Third Sector New England

MARYLAND

Medicaid Matters! Maryland
Pax Christi Montgomery

MICHIGAN

Center for Civil Justice
Detroit NOW
C.E. Fare Paralegal & Advocacy Practitioners
Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual
Violence
Triangle Foundation
UNITE HERE! Michigan State Council

MINNESOTA

Domestic Abuse Project
Sheila Wellstone Institute

MISSISSIPPI

Center for Environmental & Economic Justice, Inc.
Selfhelp Community Services, Inc.
The Village/El Pueblo of the United Methodist
Church

MISSOURI

MPOWER

Sisters of the Most Precious Blood
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Louis
Province

MONTANA

Montana People's Action

NEBRASKA

Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public
Interest
Nebraska NOW

NEW JERSEY

Central Jersey Impeach Group
CUMAC/Echo, Inc.
First Friends: Elizabeth Detention Center Visitors
Project
Interfaith Refugee Action Team-Elizabeth
Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry
New Jersey Immigration Policy Network
New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women
Saint Anthony's Social Justice Group, Saint Anthony
of Padua Church
Society of Jesus (Jesuits), NY Province (operates also
in northern New Jersey)
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Stelton Baptist Church, Statewide Organization
Urban League of Hudson County
YWCA of Essex and West Hudson

NEW MEXICO

Espanola Farmers' Market
Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry-New
Mexico
National Lawyers Guild-University of New Mexico
Chapter
New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty
New Mexico Voices for Children
Saint Joseph Roman Catholic Church, Laguna Pueblo
Southwest Creations Collaborative

NEW YORK

Brooklyn-Queens NOW
Central American Refugee Center-NY
Coalition for Asian American Children and Families
Education Fund of Family Planning Advocates of
NYS
Empire Justice Center
Fiscal Policy Institute-New York
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition
Haitian Americans United for Progress
Health & Welfare Council of Long Island

Jail Ministry, Syracuse
Medicaid Matters New York
NARAL Pro-Choice New York
New York Immigration Coalition.
New York State Legal Services
New York State NOW
New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness
New York Universal Living Wage Warriors
NMPP Community Health Worker Program
NOW-NYC
Philipstown for Democracy
Rockland Immigration Coalition
Social Justice Center, Stony Brook University School
of Social Work
Society of Jesus (Jesuits), New York Province
Vision42
Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc.
YWCA Binghamton & Broome County
YWCA Orange County
YWCA of Yonkers

NORTH CAROLINA

El Pueblo, Inc.
North Carolina Coalition against Domestic Violence
North Carolina Fair Share
North Carolina Justice Center
North Carolina NOW
Temple of Praise

OHIO

Asian American Community Services
Cleveland Jobs with Justice
Diocese of Youngstown Catholic Charities Legal
Immigration Services
May Dugan Multi-Service Center
Ohio Progressive Action Coalition
United Clevelanders Against Poverty
Universal Health Care Action Network of Ohio
(UHCAN Ohio)

OKLAHOMA

Community Action Project of Tulsa County

OREGON

American Federation of Government Employees,
AFL-CIO, Local 3937
Community Action Partnership of Oregon
HIV Advocacy Council of Oregon & Southeast
Washington
Interfaith Action for Justice
Oregon Action
Oregon Law Center

PENNSYLVANIA

Campaign for Working Families
Congreso de Latinos Unidos, Inc.-Philadelphia
District 1199C Training and Upgrading Fund-
Philadelphia
Maternity Care Coalition
PathWays PA
Pennsylvania Catholic Health Association
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition
Pennsylvania NCJW
Pennsylvania NOW
Social Concerns Committee of St. John the
Evangelist Roman Catholic Church

RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Rhode Island NCJW
Rhode Island NOW

SOUTH CAROLINA

CODA (Citizens Opposed to Domestic Abuse)
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center

TENNESSEE

The Black Children's Institute of Tennessee
Tennessee Justice Center

TEXAS

ARISE Network
Dominican Sisters of Houston
Center for Faith and Health Initiatives
Houston Community Services

VERMONT

Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual
Violence
Vermont NOW

VIRGINIA

Bon Secours Richmond Health System
Pax Christi Pentagon, Northern Virginia
Virginia Legal Aid Society
Virginia Poverty Law Center

WASHINGTON

American Federation of Government Employees,
AFL-CIO, Local 3937
Cedar River Clinics
Children's Alliance
Disability Rights Washington
Hate Free Zone
HIV Advocacy Council of Oregon & Southeast
Washington
Northwest Federation of Community Organizations
(regional)
Northwest Health Law Advocates
Seattle NOW
Triumph Treatment Services
Washington Community Action Network
Washington NOW
Washington State Coalition Against Domestic
Violence

WISCONSIN

Racine Dominican Sisters Justice and Rights Council
Politics Focus Group
Voices de la Frontera
Wisconsin NOW