



February 2, 2007

The Honorable Pete Stark
239 Cannon Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Rockefeller
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Congressman Stark and Senator Rockefeller:

The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) applauds and supports Congressman Pete Stark and Senator John Rockefeller for introducing the MediKids Health Insurance Act of 2007 and recognizing that health care coverage for *all* children is the smart and right thing to do *now*.

This important proposal from Senator Rockefeller and Congressman Stark once again puts a national spotlight on the importance of providing health coverage for America's 9 million uninsured children and millions more underinsured children. As Congress considers reauthorizing funding for SCHIP – the State Children's Health Insurance Program – this year, it has a special opportunity and responsibility to go beyond SCHIP and take the next logical, moral, and achievable step to ensure health and mental health coverage for all 9 million uninsured children in America as a significant down payment on health coverage for all.

Efforts to extend child health coverage this year must not perpetuate current barriers and disparities posed by two different and unequal child health programs which create two classes of children: one group guaranteed the comprehensive health services all children need (children's Medicaid) and the other group with no guaranteed coverage or benefit package subject to political and budget winds of 50 states. CDF's carefully developed incremental proposal to provide health coverage to all 9 million uninsured children and pregnant women at or below 300% of the federal poverty level and to blend and simplify the two programs into one which guarantees equal protections to all children is an immediate achievable next step towards the national health insurance for all children envisioned in MediKids and national health insurance for all in American. CDF looks forward to working with Senator Rockefeller and Congressman Stark and others to guarantee all children a sound health and mental health coverage system in 2007.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marian Wright Edelman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marian Wright Edelman