

Mississippi Health Advocacy Program NEWS

MHAP News

November 2007

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MHAP

Mississippi Health Advocacy Programs (MHAP) combines research, analysis and grass-roots organizing to improve health policies, practices and funding in Mississippi, especially in support of the state's poor and underserved people.

Trouble Applying for Medicaid?

Please report any problems or concerns you or your clients may be having applying for Medicaid benefits. Please call the Mississippi Center for Justice **MEDICAID HELP LINE** at **1-877-352-2269**.

The Choice is Yours!

Well it's that time again - Election Day! The campaign signs, bumper stickers, and what seems like an unending barrage of television ads have all been done in anticipation for this day. On Tuesday, November 6th, thousands of Mississippians will go to the polls and make their decision on who best represents their interests. The prominence of the health care issue has been a welcome surprise for many in our State. Both gubernatorial candidates have proposed health coverage expansion plans in their platforms. With just a few days left, take a moment to review the links provided below on each candidate's respective plan. As a concerned voter, we hope that this information will help you determine which health plan best fits you and your family's needs.

Haley Barbour: [Agenda for Mississippi's Children](#)

John Authur Eaves: [KidsCare](#)



SCHIP Stalemate

Who knew it would be this hard to get health insurance for children, right? Well it appears that the goal line is getting pushed further back each day. While there have definitely been some victories, there have also been some discouraging defeats. As of Thursday, the U.S. Senate has passed HR 3963. This is the modified CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2007 passed by the House on October 25th. The bill, which the President has promised to veto again, was once again passed by a 64-30 vote.

The most troublesome thread running throughout this struggle of passing the bill is the continual assault on attempts made to compromise on the bill. The name that seems to appear in almost every delay is our very own, Senator Trent Lott. His influence as Senate Minority Whip, is crucial in making or breaking this legislation and from all accounts his actions have shown he is more interested in doing the latter.



In July, when the original bill was being debated in the Senate Finance Committee, Trent Lott was one of only four Senators who voted against passing the bill out of committee¹. He followed that up with voting against the legislation once it did make it to the Senate floor in September². However, he planned to ask for reconsideration of an amendment he originally proposed that was supposed to fix the flaws as he saw them. The problem was that it would make no increase in the coverage of uninsured children and in fact would not provide enough funding for states to maintain their current SCHIP programs³. It appears that during Senate negotiations on the modified CHIP bill this week, Senator Lott halted talks to push for an immediate vote while other Senators wanted more time to craft a bill that could be supported by both sides⁴. Again, Senator Lott voted against the bill.

There is a quote that says, the best predictor future behavior is past behavior. If that is true, then the country faces an uphill battle with getting this legislation passed. That is not to say that the collective voice of concerned citizens should be silenced, it just means the volume has to be turned up a lot louder. We encourage you to continue to contact your Senators and Representatives to support this imperative bill for Mississippi's children.

For more information, see the links listed below.

¹http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/20/washington/20health.html?_r=1&oref=slogin&ref=us&pagewanted=print.

²http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00353

³<http://www.cbpp.org/10-10-07health.htm>

⁴<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/02/washington/02health.html>