

Castle Supports Updated Bill for Children in Need -- October 25, 2007

Washington, DC-- Delaware Congressman

Michael N. Castle voted in favor of a new version of the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act, HR 3963, which passed the House today by a vote of 265-142.

After

consideration of the similar measure HR 976, which the president vetoed on October 3, Congressman Castle organized efforts to negotiate a revised bill in order to broaden appeal. While several of his recommendations were included in this updated legislation, the Democrat majority in the House chose to schedule a vote within less than 24 hours of introducing the bill.

"This

bill has some token changes, but Members were not given adequate time to review the new legislation. More people should have been included in the negotiation process and all parties should be at the table to ensure we develop bill that provides health care for needy children. Now is the time to stop playing politics and find a bipartisan solution," Castle said.

HR

3963 expands the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) by \$35 billion and increases the number of children covered to about 10 million. This revised version includes the following changes:

- Caps family income eligibility at 300% of the poverty level (currently \$62,000 for a family of four);
- Bars illegal immigrants from enrolling in SCHIP by requiring the Social Security Administration to verify the citizenship of all applicants;
- Requires states to remove all childless adults from SCHIP by the end of 2008, instead of 2009 under the vetoed measure; and
- Requires efforts by the states to minimize any shifting of children from private insurance coverage to the SCHIP program.

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