

His diagnosis was dire: Justin, a boy with a brilliant smile and love for painting, has an extremely rare form of lung cancer. His mother, Martha, was told by doctors he may not see his 10th birthday. She is a single working mother who does temp work for local businesses, but does not receive employer based health coverage. Yet thankfully, Justin is covered under the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), providing him and nearly 9 million other American children with inexpensive, quality healthcare coverage.

For children, CHIP offers annual check-ups, immunizations and critical child centered healthcare, including the chemotherapy, radiation and surgery for Justin. Happily, Justin recently celebrated his 11th birthday and is getting ready for Christmas by painting ornaments in between hospital visits.

Due to Congressional inaction, funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which provides coverage for 9 million children, has expired and states are beginning to run out of funds. At the same time, Congress is aggressively attempting to reform the U.S. tax code prioritizing tax cuts over funding kids' health care.

Tax reform efforts can't come at the cost of inaction on key programs that help working families – like the Children's Health Insurance Program. States are running out of CHIP funds and there is no easy “on-off” switch for insuring children – inaction will result in serious consequences for children's health and family financial security. If Congress fails to renew funding for CHIP, Wisconsin will face a \$135 million hole they will have to fill by raising taxes or cutting services.

CHIP is a bipartisan success story. Enacted in 1997 with broad bipartisan support, CHIP helps low-income children from working families who do not have access to employer-based coverage, but earn too much to qualify for Medicaid. Decades of data tells us that access to early quality healthcare lead to positive short and long term outcomes for a child's success in school. For hardworking families, having access to quality and affordable healthcare coverage for their children reduces worry and stress, and increases their financial security by preventing added debt or even bankruptcy due to unforeseen medical expenses.

Our kids, like Justin, can't wait for health coverage. Congress should focus on supporting the needs of children and working families by renewing funding for CHIP. We call on Congress to move swiftly to pass legislation that supports the healthcare of our children.

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