

Compromise Reached on State Children's Health Insurance Bill

The House and Senate leadership have come to an agreement on the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) bill and are expected to vote on the compromise bill next week, possibly as early as Tuesday. The bill would provide an additional \$35 billion for SCHIP, not the \$50 billion passed in the House bill. The SCHIP program expires on September 30. President Bush has threatened to veto the bill because he believes the bill expands the SCHIP program.

Senator Baucus (D-MT), chair of the Senate Finance Committee which has jurisdiction over Medicare, has agreed to take up Medicare legislation later this year. Some of the provisions that could be considered include a payment increase for nursing homes and home health agencies, a payment increase for physicians that accept Medicare, and changes to the Medicare Part D program.

Advocates are encouraged to contact their U.S. Senators and Representatives with the following messages:

- (1) The time is now for Congress to pass an SCHIP reauthorization bill. To not pass a reauthorization bill and extend the program would leave millions of eligible children without coverage.

- (2) The final SCHIP reauthorization bill should provide coverage to at least four million uninsured children.

Kathy Saile to Leave LSA, Direct Domestic Policy for the Catholic Bishops

Kathy Saile, the Associate Director of Public Policy for LSA for the past three years has accepted a position as Director of Domestic Social Development for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Kathy's last day at the LSA office will be October 5.

Kathy's contributions at LSA were significant, including author of the *LSA Public Policy Advocacy Toolkit* and *Lutheran Voices in Health and Social Services Public Policy Advocacy*. The toolkit includes an introduction about public policy advocacy and key definitions, helpful information about building relationships with government decision-makers, grassroots advocates, community partners and the media. Creating a structure within the social ministry organization is also discussed at length. An order form for the toolkit is on the LSA public policy website. Kathy has been co-chair of the national Social Services Block Grant Coalition and a board member of the Coalition on Human Needs.

LSA has benefited from Kathy's skills and talents for the past three years and will miss her collegial style and passion for justice.

Kathy joins the previous LSA Associate Director of Public Policy in leading a faith denomination advocacy department. Andrew Genszler, previously Associate Director of Public Policy for LSA, now directs the Washington, D.C. public policy office of the ELCA.

LSA will publicize the position opening in LSA's Personnel Bulletin and on the LSA website in early October.