



# Senator Eliot Shapleigh

District 29

Texas Press Release

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## For Immediate Release

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### **TEXAS SENATE PASSES BILL CO-AUTHORED BY SENATOR SHAPLEIGH TO EXPAND CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE ELIGIBILITY**

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**AUSTIN** - This week, the Texas Senate passed a bill to expand participation in the state's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The bill was coauthored by Senator Eliot Shapleigh (D- El Paso).

[SB 841](#), passed Wednesday, expands CHIP eligibility to children whose families earn up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level. Children are currently only eligible for enrollment if their family earns up to 200 percent federal poverty level.

Families of four with an annual income of about \$22,000 are at the federal poverty level, according to 2009 guidelines set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The bill also creates a buy-in option for children above the 300 percent of that limit, where they can pay a premium and fees to access health insurance.

The bill could expand coverage to more than 80,000 additional children in Texas. Texas ranks [first in the nation in the number and percentage of uninsured children](#). Of the approximately 9 million uninsured children in the U.S., 1.5 million are from Texas. The state also ranks [seventh nationally in the number of children living in poverty](#).

"Insuring more Texas children in CHIP will make for healthier children, and save us money over time," Senator Shapleigh said. "What is a better investment than that?"

Earlier this session, Senator Shapleigh filed nearly identical legislation to SB 841 in his [SB 577](#). This session, Senator Shapleigh also filed [SB 349](#), which would expand the state's Medicaid enrollment period from six to 12 months.

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