



# Senator Eliot Shapleigh

District 29

Texas Press Release

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**For Immediate Release**

June 10, 2009

## **SENATOR SHAPLEIGH CALLS ON GOVERNOR PERRY TO INCLUDE CHIP EXPANSION IN SPECIAL SESSION**

*"Expanding CHIP is vitally important in Texas as the state currently ranks first in the nation in the number and percentage of uninsured children. The state also ranks seventh nationally in the number of children living in poverty. Of the approximately 9 million uninsured children in the U.S., one in six are from Texas. Insuring more Texas children in CHIP will make for healthier children, and save the state money over time by helping families avoid using hospital emergency rooms as their only access to health care."*

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**EL PASO** – Today, Senator Shapleigh sent the following letter to Texas Governor Rick Perry urging him to include expanding the state's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to the list of issues legislators must address during the upcoming special session. Governor Perry announced the need for a special session Tuesday.

June 10, 2009

The Honorable Rick Perry  
Governor of Texas  
P.O. Box 12428  
Room 2S.1  
Austin, Texas 78711-2428

VIA HAND DELIVERY AND VIA U.S. MAIL

RE: Special Session Call for CHIP

Dear Governor Perry:

As you prepare for the special session you recently announced, I urge you to add expanding the state's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to the call.

- More -

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This session, both the Senate and the House passed legislation to expand CHIP participation to families who earn up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level. Senate Bill 841 by Senator Averitt passed out of the Senate on a 29-2 vote and was reported favorably by the House Committee on Human Services on a 7-0 vote before dying on the House Major State Calendar.

House Bill 2962 by Representative Coleman passed out of the House on a 87-55 vote and was referred to the Senate Committee on Finance. As you are aware, children are currently only eligible for enrollment if their family earns up to 200 percent of federal poverty level. Passage of a CHIP bill could expand coverage to more than 80,000 additional children in Texas.

The cost of expanding the program is already included in contingency appropriations under Section 17.64 of Article IX in Senate Bill 1, which is now on your desk. As you know, the federal government matches \$3 for every \$1 that Texas dedicates to CHIP.

Expanding CHIP is vitally important in Texas as the state currently ranks first in the nation in the number and percentage of uninsured children. The state also ranks seventh nationally in the number of children living in poverty. Of the approximately 9 million uninsured children in the U.S., one in six are from Texas. Insuring more Texas children in CHIP will make for healthier children, and save the state money over time by helping families avoid using hospital emergency rooms as their only access to health care.

Votes taken during the 81st session demonstrate bipartisan support for expanding CHIP. Over several years, polls have shown strong support amongst Texans for increasing .

Our great state should lead in insuring our own children and not wait for the Obama health plan to do what needs to be done. Please add CHIP to the call.

Very truly yours,

Eliot Shapleigh

ES/dc

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