

Election Survey Finds Broad Support for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)

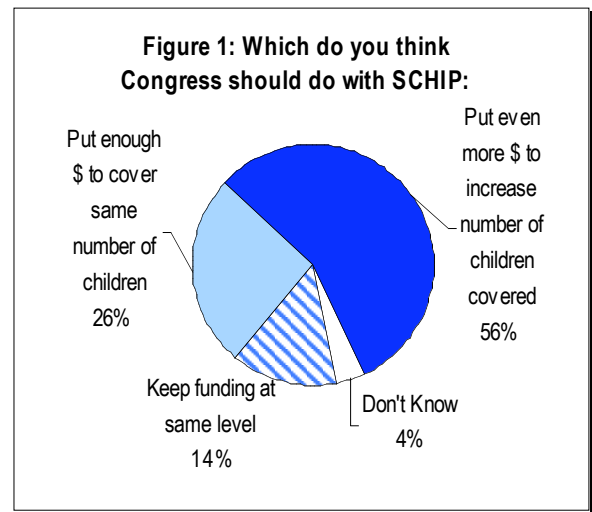
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More than 8 in 10 voters want to increase spending on the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), according to a survey conducted for the Center for Children and Families (CCF) at Georgetown University Health Policy Institute. Lake Research Partners (LRP) conducted this survey of 1,000 voters during last month's midterm elections (November 6-7, 2006), to examine voters' opinions about future funding for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Key findings from this survey and other recent research on the topic follow.

More than 8 in 10 voters want to increase spending on SCHIP.

Voters were asked about three avenues Congress could take regarding SCHIP funding:

- Keep funding the program at the same level even though that will mean dropping children from the program because of the rising cost of health care;
- Put enough money into the program so it can continue to cover the same number of children as it does now; or
- Put even more money into the program so that more of the estimated 8.3 million uninsured children in America can be covered.



As Figure One shows, only 14 percent of voters say the incoming Congress should keep funding at the current level, and 82 percent say funding should be increased. Of these, two-thirds say that Congress should put even more money into SCHIP to expand the number of children covered.

Voters most likely to want to expand SCHIP include women (61%), African Americans (77%), Democrats (71%), and Independents (60%). Even among Republican voters, more than three times as many would like increase spending (72%) than would prefer it be kept at current levels (20%). Republicans are split between increasing funds to cover the same number of children it does now (34%) or expand the program to cover more children (38%).

Other public opinions surveys also demonstrate American's concern about health care and insurance coverage for our nation's children.

- A recent Kaiser Family Foundation conducted in November 2006 finds that 85% of the public favors the government doing more to help provide health insurance for more Americans. The majority of these Americans says children should be the first segment of the population to provide health insurance coverage (57%). Additionally, two thirds (67%) of the public says the government right now is spending too little on health care.
- According to a July 2006 survey of 800 likely voters conducted by Public Opinion Strategies for the Catholic Health Association of the United States, 70 percent of likely voters agree that providing affordable, quality health insurance to all children in the U.S. should be a top priority for Congress and the President. The survey also found that two thirds (65%) of the voters surveyed said the federal government should take financial responsibility to cover uninsured children. Of those who feel the government has this responsibility, 80 percent would be willing to pay more taxes to finance expanded coverage.
- A fall 2005 survey of likely voters by Public Opinion Strategies and Hart Research showed similar results. When asked about the importance they personally place on a number of different health care issues, over eight in ten (85%) say "all children having basic care" is among the most important issues. Large majorities of Democrats (92%), Independents (84%) and Republicans (77%) say this is very important.
- Parents are concerned about their own children's access to good medical care and insurance coverage. According to a 2005 survey conducted for *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly* by Greenburg Quinlan Rosner Research, 62 percent of parents with children 18 or younger at home are at least somewhat concerned about getting health insurance and good medical care for their children. Four in ten (42%) worry about this *a lot*.