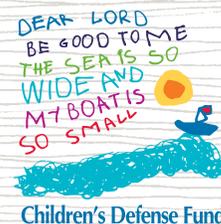


# Steer the Next Congress to Focus on *All* Children

Help CDF generate at least 5,000 letters to Members of Congress urging them to provide health coverage for all children!



There is growing momentum for our new President and Congress to take up health care reform next year and we want to make sure that any reform legislation includes health coverage for all children. Join CDF and the thousands of other child advocates this holiday season in sending a letter to your newly elected Members of Congress today! To really make an impact, our goal is to generate at least 5,000 letters by January 12.

As we collectively work to ensure that all children get the health coverage they need in 2009, we encourage you to **organize a letter writing campaign** in your organization or community. **Our goal is to generate at least 5,000 letters by February 1, 2009.**

## Consider these steps when organizing a letter writing campaign:

**Step 1:** Secure the support from the leaders of your organization or community.

**Step 2:** Visit [www.congressmerge.com](http://www.congressmerge.com) to find the names of your current Members of Congress. Find out if your current Members of Congress will be replaced in the next Congress by going to [www.childrensdefense.org/electionguide](http://www.childrensdefense.org/electionguide) and entering your address and zip code under "My Races."

**Step 3:** Promote the letter writing campaign through emails, message boards, word of mouth and announcements. Create a buzz among members of your organization or community, encouraging them to **step forward and take action for *all* children.**

**Step 4:** Make sure you have all the supplies you need for people to write letters and ask each person to write three letters: one to their Congressperson and the others to the two Senators who represent them. Provide the sample letter (found on the next page) to each person writing a letter.

**Encourage participants by letting them know that, next to office visits, personalized letters are the most effective way to communicate with Congress.** Also, let participants know they are part of a larger movement as hundreds of organizations and communities across the country will be participating in similar letter writing events.

**Step 5:** **Collect the signed letters and send them back to the Children's Defense Fund. We will combine your letters with others from your state and Congressional district and deliver them all at once.**

### Letters can be collected and mailed to:

Field Department  
Children's Defense Fund  
25 E Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

Thank you for organizing this critical campaign to improve the lives of children! If you need assistance or additional resources, please contact CDF's Field Division at (202) 662-3661.

## Sample Letter to Members of Congress

Dear Senator Clark,

My name is Tim Johnson, and I am a constituent living in Springfield.

Recently I learned that there are 9 million children in America living without health coverage. This issue is important to me because children are our nation's greatest investment and poor health prevents children from reaching their full potential and robs America of its future.

A neighbor, and close friend, works hard but still struggles to afford health coverage for his family. Worrying about whether or not he will be able to afford the health coverage his children need should not be a concern that he or any other person has to face in our nation today.

I urge you, as a member of the next Congress, to support and pass children's health coverage legislation that includes the following:

- 1) Affordable coverage for every child and pregnant woman
- 2) Comprehensive benefits
- 3) Simple enrollment and recertification process
- 4) Ensured real access to services

In 2009, Congress will have the opportunity to cover every child. Don't waste this opportunity. Now is the time to step forward for all children. I am counting on you.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. I look forward to a reply from your office.

Sincerely,  
*Tim Johnson*  
Tim Johnson  
1800 Healthychild Lane, Springfield

**Step 1:** Let your elected officials know **who you are, where you live**, and the **name of the organization** in which you are a member or leader.

**Step 2:** State the problem: **There are nine million children in America without comprehensive health coverage.**

Let your elected officials know that this is an issue that is important to you:  
"This is important to me because..."

**Step 3:** Include a personal story. If you know of a child or family that has been affected by being uninsured or underinsured, share their story with your lawmakers.

**Step 4:** Ask your elected officials, as members of the next Congress, to only support health coverage legislation that includes the following:

- Affordable coverage for every child and pregnant woman
- Comprehensive benefits
- Simple enrollment and recertification processes
- Ensured real access to services

**Step 5:** Let your elected officials know that you are aware of the growing momentum to take up health care reform in 2009 and that you want to make sure that any health care legislation includes health coverage for all children.

**Step 6:** Thank your Congressional members. Let them know that you will be following up to discuss what they can do to ensure health coverage for every child and pregnant woman.

**Be sure to sign your letter and to include your address, phone number and title, if applicable.**