

Congressman Ron Paul U.S. House of Representatives June 12, 2002

AFFORDABILITY OF CHILD HEALTH CARE

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to help working Americans provide for their children's health care needs by introducing the Child Health Care Affordability Act. The Child Health Care Affordability Act provides parents with a tax credit of up to \$500 for health care expenses of dependent children. Parents caring for a child with a disability, terminal disease, cancer, or any other health condition requiring specialized care would receive a tax credit of up to \$3,000 to help cover their child's health care expenses. The tax credit would be available to all citizens regardless of whether or not they itemize their deductions.

The tax credits provided in this bill will be especially helpful to those Americans whose employers cannot afford to provide their employees health insurance. These workers must struggle to meet the medical bills of themselves and their families. This burden is especially heavy on, parents whose children have a medical condition, such as cancer or a physical disability, which requires long-term or specialized health care.

As an OB-GYN who has had the privilege of delivering more than four thousand babies, I know how important it is that parents have the resources to provide adequate health care for their children. The inability of many working Americans to provide health care for their children is rooted in one of the great inequities of the tax code: Congress' failure to allow individuals the same ability to deduct health care costs that it grants to businesses. As a direct result of Congress' refusal to provide individuals with health care related tax credits, parents whose employers do not provide health insurance have to struggle to provide health care for their children. Many of these parents work in low-income jobs; oftentimes their only recourse to health care is the local emergency room.

Sometimes parents are forced to delay seeking care for their children until minor health concern that could have been easily treated become serious problems requiring expensive treatment! If these parents had access to the type of tax credits provided in the Child Health Care Affordability Act, they would be better able to provide care for their children, and our nation's already overcrowded emergency room facilities would be relieved of the burden of having to provide routine care for people who otherwise cannot afford it.

According to research on the effects of this bill done by my staff and legislative counsel, the

benefit of these tax credits would begin to be felt by joint filers with incomes slightly above \$18,000 dollars a year, or single income filers with incomes slightly above \$15,000 per year. Clearly this bill will be of the most benefit to low-income Americans balancing the demands of taxation with the needs of their children.

Under the Child Health Care Affordability Act, a struggling single mother with an asthmatic child would at last be able to provide for her child's needs; while a working-class family will not have to worry about how they will pay the bills if one of their children requires lengthy hospitalization or some other form of specialized care.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress has a moral responsibility to provide tax relief for low-income parents struggling to care for a sick child, in order to help them better meet their child's medical expenses. Some may say that we cannot enact the Child Health Care Affordability Act because it would cause the government to lose revenue, but who is more deserving of this money, Congress or the working parents of a sick child?

The Child Health Care Affordability Act takes a major step toward helping working Americans meet their health care needs by providing them with generous health care related tax cuts and tax credits. I urge my colleagues to support the pro-family, pro-health care tax cuts contained in the Child Health Care Affordability Act.