



PRESS RELEASE

OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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House Votes to Cover All Kids

SB 558 ensures health care coverage for all Oregon children

On the final day of the 2017 legislative session, a bipartisan vote by the Oregon House of Representatives sent [Senate Bill 558](#) to the Governor.

The bill—the product of years of work by advocates and legislators from both parties in the House and the Senate—expands eligibility for the Health Care for All Children program to include all children residing in Oregon below 300% of the federal poverty level.

The goal of the SB 558 is to expand coverage to the thousands of children who remain uninsured even after implementation of the Affordable Care Act: 3.6% of children ages 0-6 and 3.7% of children ages 6-17. SB 558 was carried by Rep. John Huffman (R-The Dalles) and was a priority for retired Rep. Vic Gilliam (R-Silverton). It passed the House on a bipartisan 37-23 vote.

“For so many families in my district, when a child experiences a medical emergency, it can be one of the most painful things a parent can face,” says **Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon (D-Woodburn)**. “That is because it often means choosing between getting the care that their children need, or putting food on the table or paying rent that month. No Oregon family should ever have to make that choice. Health care coverage is key to getting children the care they need to preventing illness and provide parents with the information they need about their child’s development.”

Evidence shows that a lack of access to health care leads to higher rates of absenteeism. Early intervention and behavioral health screenings can address health issues that affect school performance, attendance, behavior and overall health of our children.

I’ve seen firsthand the impact that the lack of medical coverage can have on students who are eager to learn and be successful,” says **Rep. Diego Hernandez (D-Portland)**. “I have especially seen this affect low-income kids and communities of color. For some of these kids, being healthy and doing well in school means that they have a shot at lifting themselves and their families out of poverty. We need to do our best to protect and care for those who are most vulnerable and the working families who contribute so much to our economy and our society.”

Having already passed the Senate, the bill now goes to Governor Brown for her signature.

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