

November 17, 2005

**THE
CATHOLIC HEALTH
ASSOCIATION**
OF THE UNITED STATES

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,000 Catholic health care sponsors, systems, facilities, and related organizations, I would like to express our support for the amendment offered by Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) to express the sense of the Senate in favor of the provision of health care for all children before providing further tax cuts for capital gains and dividends.



CHA is committed to health care for all, and believes expanding coverage to uninsured children is a critical step toward this goal. Currently, there are nearly 9 million uninsured children living in the United States. CHA has long advocated the expansion of publicly-funded health insurance programs like Medicaid and SCHIP as a way to address the plight of this large and vulnerable population. CHA also supports private sector initiatives that would provide financial assistance to families so they can purchase coverage either through the workplace or outside the workplace.

Although provisions to extend capital gains and dividend tax cuts were recently removed from the Senate tax reconciliation package, these provisions are now expected to be reinserted in Conference Committee. The cost of a two-year extension of these tax cuts is \$20 billion, which is approximately the total cost of covering all 9 million uninsured children in America. The Catholic health ministry believes the priorities of the nation must be reordered to ensure that all children have access to health, a basic human right, before offering more tax cuts. Therefore, we support S. AMDT. 2596 to ensure that children, for whom health care coverage is such a vital necessity, come first in our nation's fiscal priorities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Michael Rodgers".

Michael Rodgers
Vice President, Public Policy and Advocacy

WASHINGTON OFFICE
1875 Eye Street, NW
Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20006-5409
Phone 202-296-3993
Fax 202-296-3997
www.chausa.org