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## SENATE PASSES CHILDREN'S HEALTH CARE BILL ENHANCING OPPORTUNITY FOR NEBRASKA

### Senator Nelson Stands with Nebraska's Children and Opens Door for State Improvements

Thursday night, Senator Nelson and 65 other Senators stood with our children to ensure their good health. The Senate passed a bill to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). The House passed a similar bill last week. SCHIP is a highly successful and efficient system that provides critical health care coverage for children in families who are not eligible for Medicaid but cannot afford private health care coverage. These bills provide increased funding and bonus incentives which will allow Nebraska to not only continue covering the SCHIP-eligible children enrolled in our Kids Connection program, but to improve and strengthen our Kids Connection program.

LB 136, introduced by Senator Avery, makes it possible for Nebraska to take advantage of this new federal law immediately. LB 136 would make improvements to the Kids Connection program by extending health care to more children, enrolling more of our eligible children, and creating system efficiencies that remove some of the barriers that keep eligible children from participating. Nebraska's Kids Connection program was once hailed as a national model. Today, Nebraska has one of the seven lowest eligibility rates in the country and thousands of our uninsured children are income eligible for Kids Connection but not enrolled. The SCHIP bill passed by Congress, with the help of our Legislature, provides us with a unique opportunity to improve our system and prioritize our children's health.

At this time of economic crisis, maintaining health care coverage for children in our low-income families is even more important. Strengthening SCHIP is a key first step in ensuring that the economic recovery begins with our families.

Senator Nelson has long recognized that SCHIP is an extremely successful program and is an integral part of our health care system. With his vote he has protected and strengthened SCHIP so that it can continue to provide critical health care to our low income children. We applaud his efforts and dedication to our children's health and our children's futures.

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Nebraska Appleseed, a nonprofit, nonpartisan public interest law project, is a national leader in addressing social problems facing vulnerable children without loving and permanent homes, low-income families working hard to make ends meet, and new immigrants seeking a better life. Nebraska Appleseed's current year action plan and

description of its six program areas, significant litigation and policy reform successes, and broad-based accomplishments can be found at [neappleseed.org](http://neappleseed.org).

Nebraska Appleseed is a part of the Appleseed network of independent state-based public interest law centers working to identify and address social injustices. The Appleseed network seeks to build a just society through education, legal advocacy, community activism and policy expertise by addressing root causes and producing practical, systemic solutions with broad implication. For more information visit [appleseednetwork.org](http://appleseednetwork.org).

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