



MISSOURI SENATE

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Senate Rejects Effort to Expand Health Care for Missouri Children

Sen. Smith's Amendment Expands Care to 10,000 Children

JEFFERSON CITY — The Missouri Senate late last night rejected an amendment offered by Sen. Jeff Smith, D-St. Louis, which would have expanded health care coverage for an estimated 10,000 Missouri children under the State Children's Health Insurance program, or S-CHIP. Sen. Smith offered his amendment during debate on House Bill 11, an appropriations bill funding the Missouri Department of Social Services. The amendment failed on a mostly party-line vote, with all present (21 of 23 total) Senate Republicans rejecting the effort to provide health care to thousands of needy children.

"This measure would have cost each family in Missouri about one-half penny a day, or about two dollars each year to provide health care to ten thousand Missouri children," Sen. Smith said. "We're debating a 23-billion dollar state budget and I'm asking for less than 6-million dollars to make sure our children don't fall through the cracks and go without health care. Also, the federal government would send us nearly \$3 for every \$1 we spend on this. I think this is a wise expenditure, since our federal tax dollars are currently going to subsidize the expansion of children's health care in states like Massachusetts and New York."

Sen. Smith's amendment would have eliminated S-CHIP premiums for families at up to 185% of the federal poverty level.

"I'm trying to give the struggling mom with two kids some peace of mind by making sure her children receive the health care services they need," Sen. Smith said. "It seems like the compassionate, common-sense thing to do."