

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4031

To give States the flexibility to reduce bureaucracy by streamlining enrollment processes for the Medicaid and State children's health insurance programs through better linkages with programs providing nutrition and related assistance to low-income families.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 25, 2004

Ms. CARSON of Indiana (for herself, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. EMANUEL, Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, Mr. OWENS, Mr. FILNER, Mr. FROST, and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To give States the flexibility to reduce bureaucracy by streamlining enrollment processes for the Medicaid and State children's health insurance programs through better linkages with programs providing nutrition and related assistance to low-income families.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Children’s Express
5 Lane to Health Coverage Act of 2004”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.**

2 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Despite gains made in recent years,
4 8,900,000 children in the United States are unin-
5 sured. Of those, 6,900,000 are eligible for public
6 health insurance coverage.

7 (2) Most low-income uninsured children are en-
8 rolled in nutrition and related programs that operate
9 under income guidelines similar to those of the med-
10 icaid program. In fact, 63 percent, or 4,300,000,
11 low-income uninsured children are in families that
12 receive benefits through the food stamps program,
13 the National school lunch program, or the special
14 supplemental nutrition program for women, infants
15 and children (commonly referred to as “WIC”).

16 (3) The public would be well served if Federal
17 means-tested public programs were able to improve
18 administrative efficiency and coordination as well as
19 reduce unnecessary bureaucracy.

20 (4) Uninsured children would be well served if
21 their enrollment in a nutrition-based or other means-
22 tested program could serve as a gateway to health
23 coverage.

24 (5) Existing law already allows children to be
25 found income eligible for WIC based on their enroll-
26 ment in the medicaid program. Current law does

1 not, however, give States adequate flexibility to
2 make an income determination for eligibility for the
3 medicaid or State children's health insurance pro-
4 gram based on an uninsured child's enrollment in
5 WIC or another public program.

6 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to give
7 States the flexibility to find children income eligible for
8 the medicaid program or State children's health insurance
9 program based on the fact that the children are eligible
10 for nutrition assistance or similar public programs with
11 comparable income standards and methodologies.

12 **SEC. 3. STATE OPTION TO PROVIDE FOR SIMPLIFIED DE-**
13 **TERMINATIONS OF A CHILD'S FINANCIAL ELI-**
14 **GIBILITY FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE UNDER**
15 **MEDICAID OR CHILD HEALTH ASSISTANCE**
16 **UNDER SCHIP.**

17 (a) MEDICAID.—Section 1902(e) of the Social Secu-
18 rity Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a(e)) is amended by adding at
19 the end the following:

20 “(13)(A) At the option of the State, the plan
21 may provide that financial eligibility requirements
22 for medical assistance are met for an individual who
23 is under an age specified by the State (not to exceed
24 21 years of age) by using a determination (made
25 within a reasonable period, as found by the State,

1 before its use for this purpose) of the individual's
2 family or household income or resources, notwith-
3 standing any differences in budget unit, disregard,
4 deeming, or other methodology, by a Federal or
5 State agency (or a public or private entity making
6 such determination on behalf of such agency) speci-
7 fied by the plan, including but not limited to the
8 agencies administering the Food Stamp Act of 1977,
9 the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act,
10 and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, provided that
11 such agency has fiscal liabilities or responsibilities
12 affected or potentially affected by such determina-
13 tions and provided that all information furnished by
14 such agency pursuant to this subparagraph is used
15 solely for purposes of determining eligibility for med-
16 ical assistance under the State plan approved under
17 this title or for child health assistance under a State
18 plan approved under title XXI.

19 “(B) Nothing in subparagraph (A) shall be con-
20 strued—

21 “(i) to authorize the denial of medical as-
22 sistance under a State plan approved under this
23 title or of child health assistance under a State
24 plan approved under title XXI to an individual
25 who, without the application of this paragraph

1 or an option exercised thereunder, would qualify
2 for such assistance;

3 “(ii) to relieve a State of the obligation
4 under subsection (a)(8) to furnish assistance
5 with reasonable promptness after the submis-
6 sion of an initial application that is evaluated or
7 for which evaluation is requested pursuant to
8 this paragraph; or

9 “(iii) to relieve a State of the obligation to
10 determine eligibility on other grounds for an in-
11 dividual found to be ineligible under this para-
12 graph.

13 “(C) At the option of a State, the financial eli-
14 gibility process described in subparagraph (A) may
15 apply to an individual who is older than age 21 if
16 such individual’s eligibility for medical assistance is
17 based on pregnancy or if such individual is a parent,
18 guardian, or other caretaker relative of an individual
19 found eligible under subparagraph (A).”.

20 (b) SCHIP.—Section 2107(e)(1) of the Social Secu-
21 rity Act (42 U.S.C. 1397gg(e)(1)) is amended by adding
22 at the end the following:

23 “(E) Section 1902(e)(13) (relating to the
24 State option to base a child’s eligibility for as-
25 sistance on financial determinations made by a

1 program providing nutrition or other public as-
2 sistance).”.

3 (c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
4 this section take effect on October 1, 2003.

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