

**Remarks by NCLR President and CEO, Janet Murguía**  
**Press Conference of Civil Rights Leaders on the Reauthorization of the State Children's**  
**Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)**  
**January 14, 2009 – 10:30am**

Thank you for attending today. As you can see by the presence of several of our core partners, and distinguished members of Congress from both sides of the aisle, the importance of health coverage for Latino children is not only a critical issue, but a bipartisan one. We stand together today to call for the passage of legislation that guarantees that our kids have the chance to become healthy participants of our nation. We insist that Congress remove the five-year waiting period to Medicaid and SCHIP that keeps so many legal immigrant children and pregnant women from accessing health care.

We applaud House leadership for incorporating provisions that include the legal immigrant restoration into their SCHIP bill. NCLR will be working fiercely to ensure that this bill is passed.

We hope we will have the opportunity to do the same in the Senate, but thus far, NCLR is disappointed by the Senate discussions about children's health care.

America is not the kind of country that says some kids deserve health care and some don't. Therefore, we do not think Senators should be making arbitrary choices about which children to cover. We urge them to include legal immigrant children in their bill.

This is the first chance for the new Administration and Congress to show that they are not just paying lip service to Latinos. In November of 2008, the Latino voters demonstrated the influential role that Hispanics play, and will continue to play, in American politics. At least 10 million Latinos went to polls to cast their votes. Latinos were energized to vote by their conviction that the future could bring better opportunities for themselves, their families, and their children. Today, we implore you not to disappoint them.

It is in the hope that you have truly committed to the improving the well-being of the Latino community, that NCLR urges Congress to take every step possible to remove the five-year waiting period for legal immigrant children and restore their access to Medicaid and SCHIP in the upcoming reauthorization of the program.

Thank you.