

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 12, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
H-232 Capitol Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-6501

Dear Madam Speaker:

Last session, we were heartened to learn that provisions designed to improve access to health care for children residing in the U.S. territories were included in the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007 (H.R. 976). We therefore write to urge your continued support for the fair and equitable treatment of children in the U.S. territories in any legislation to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) that may be considered in the 111th Congress. These provisions are integral to the expansion of health care services in the territories and to the well-being of our most vulnerable children.

We also write to respectfully request that the stimulus package increase the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) matching rates, and raise or remove the statutory spending caps that are currently applicable in the U.S. territories. Under existing law, the territories receive the lowest FMAP contribution permissible under the applicable statute, namely 50 percent. In addition, the territories are subject to strict spending caps that severely limit the total annual contribution that the federal government can make to the territorial governments in order to defray the latter's Medicaid costs. Accordingly, we urge that the territories be afforded, at least for the temporary period provided for under the stimulus package, an FMAP rate no less favorable than that afforded to the District of Columbia – whose rate is set by statute at 70 percent – and that the Medicaid spending caps applicable in the Territories be raised or removed for the same coverage period.

Like in the States, Americans in the U.S. territories face substantial challenges with respect to rising health care costs and inadequate health care coverage, problems which have been exacerbated as a result of the current economic crisis. The disparate treatment afforded the territories under Medicaid lacks solid grounding in principle and creates barriers to health care for our residents that they would not face if they resided in the states. The matching rate that we are respectfully requesting – 70 percent – better reflects the actual health care needs of our residents and our respective Medicaid programs and thus is more equitable and just for Americans living in the territories.

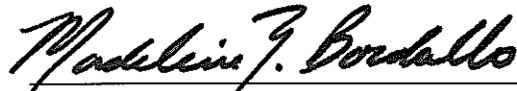
On behalf of the U.S. citizens and residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana

Islands, we thank you for your past support and for your consideration of this important request. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us or our respective staffs – Britt Weinstock in the Office of Congresswoman Christensen, Paulo Pontemayor in the Office of Congresswoman Bordallo, John Laufer in the Office of Congressman Pierluisi, Becky Lizama in the Office of Congressman Sablan or Fati Fatilua in the Office of Congressman Faleomavaega.

With warm regards,



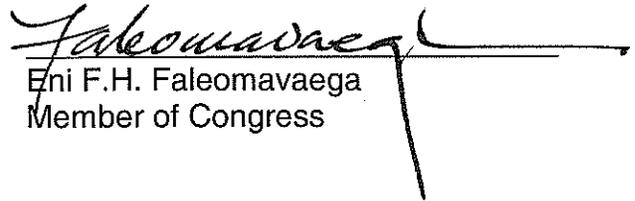
Donna M. Christensen
Member of Congress



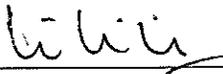
Madeleine Bordallo
Member of Congress



Pedro Pierluisi
Member of Congress



Eni F.H. Faleomavaega
Member of Congress



Gregorio Sablan
Member of Congress