

Voices for Utah Children Statement on the Risk the Reconciliation Bill Pose

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We are disappointed in the recent passage of H.R. 1: "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" in the House of Representatives which if enacted, will result in thousands of Utah children and their families losing access to health care, food, and other support programs. Among its many harmful provisions, we strongly oppose the ones that threaten the health coverage and care of children across our state. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the bill would cut gross Medicaid and CHIP spending by over \$860 billion over the next ten years.

Medicaid is critical to ensuring a child's development is stable and well-supported. Cutting billions over the next decade for children ages 0–10 and creating additional red tape interruptions puts the health and long-term development of low-income children in our state at risk. Children who rely on Medicaid during their most critical early years will be directly impacted.

All Children

Nearly [175,000 children](#) are served by Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), that means children in our state make up 46% of all Medicaid beneficiaries in Utah. The bill will add onerous bureaucratic red tape that will impact

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children's ability to receive stable and consistent care.

One provision of the bill places a moratorium of the rule relating to [Eligibility and enrollment for Medicaid and CHIP](#). This rule sought to remove access barriers for children who access CHIP. If this rule is rescinded, states could once again impose waiting periods, lifetime limits on coverage, and lock-out periods if families can't pay premiums on time. That means a child could be forced to wait before seeing a doctor, lose coverage forever if they hit a cap, or be shut out of care for something as simple as a late payment. Rolling back this rule would reopen the door to harmful policies that make it harder for kids to get and stay covered.

When all children have access to high quality healthcare, families thrive, communities grow, and our state becomes stronger.

Rural Children

[21% of children who live in rural areas or small towns](#) get their health coverage through Medicaid/CHIP. For families in rural Utah, where healthcare access can be sparse, this coverage is indispensable. In the San Juan School District alone, [43.4% of children](#) were enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP from 2019 to 2023.

Cutting Medicaid means kids in school could lose access to [critical services](#) like mental and behavioral health support, school nurses, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, and occupational and physical therapists.

Medicaid funding for rural children and families includes funding for hospitals, doctors' offices, pharmacies, and nursing homes. Without these federal dollars, healthcare providers will face major losses that could force layoffs, closures, and service reductions. Additionally, we could see exacerbated provider shortages in several rural areas throughout our state.

Rural children need access to Medicaid and CHIP in order to stay in school, grow up healthy, and reach their full potential.

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Children with Disabilities

For children with disabilities and developmental needs, Medicaid provides essential services like unlimited speech, physical, and occupational therapy, mental health care, autism support and more. These services help children overcome challenges and reach their full potential, while giving families hope and relief as they navigate complex care needs.

In Utah, the [Medically Complex Children's Waiver](#) covers about 900 children, offering not only Medicaid coverage but also critical supports like respite care and case management for families.

Cuts to Medicaid will shift costs to states, forcing tough decisions about which programs to eliminate, including those considered "optional," like this waiver. As a result, some families could face heartbreaking consequences, including potential separation if children are forced to move from home-based care to institutional settings or intermediate care facilities far from their communities.

Children with disabilities need access to Medicaid to reach their full potential.

Immigrant Children

An additional provision would penalize Utah and other states by decreasing federal Medicaid funding for the Medicaid Expansion population, unless Utah takes away the health coverage of Utah immigrant children.

State CHIP has provided critical access to care to children in 22 of our 29 counties, 600 vaccines, and 1,500 wellness visits. It is a bipartisan program that was developed by Utah. Additionally Lawfully Residing Children are also at risk of losing coverage.

State CHIP works. It helps save Utah millions of dollars by ensuring children receive preventive care instead of relying on costly emergency services. [Research](#) reveals

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that children living in states that offer coverage to all kids regardless of their immigration status are less likely to be uninsured or miss out on medical, dental, or preventive care compared to children in states without such type of coverage.

We should not be punished for making the right choice in ensuring low income children and parents have coverage. We must ground ourselves in our Utah values and hold onto the compassionate state led solutions we have championed.

Let's not hold our most vulnerable hostage and instead let us fight against this overreach and question the federal government's authority to prevent Utah from taking care of Utah children and families.

We all thrive when kids in our state have the opportunity to reach their full potential, regardless of where they are born.

Take Action Now

Having coverage means early treatment, fewer preventable hospitalizations, better educational outcomes, and a healthier future workforce. **We urge our Congressional delegation to stand up for all Utah children and allow Utah to continue to provide healthcare to the children who need it the most.**

We're rallying **100 calls & emails to protect 100% of Utah kids**. Join us by visiting 100percentkids.health today.