



CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

A Voice for Washington's Children, Youth & Families

For Immediate Release

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2009 CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN ANNOUNCED

Outstanding lawmakers of the 2009 legislative session recognized

(June 15, 2009) — The Children's Alliance today announced the 2009 Champions for Children, 10 lawmakers who made children a priority this year.

Champions for Children are state lawmakers recognized by the Children's Alliance for their outstanding service on behalf of children. Each Champion for Children provided significant leadership during the 2009 state legislative session in preserving, protecting, or advancing state policies or investments that will improve the well-being of vulnerable children in Washington. These lawmakers distinguished themselves by joining with the Children's Alliance to make children a priority in one of the toughest economic recessions in recent memory.

This year's Champions for Children are:

- **Speaker of the House Frank Chopp**

Speaker Chopp played a pivotal role in securing the needed funding in the early budget bill, House Bill 1694, and the final budget bill to reinstate a planned extension of the Apple Health for Kids program to uninsured children living in families earning between 250 and 300 percent of the federal poverty level, coverage that was threatened by the budget crisis. With Speaker Chopp's leadership, the state is well on the way to reaching the goal of covering all children by 2010.

- **Representative Ruth Kagi**

Representative Kagi led efforts to protect evidence-based home-visiting programs that support effective parenting in vulnerable families. In a year when many programs faced elimination, Representative Kagi worked to preserve home-visiting programs that have been shown to reduce school dropout rates, reduce child abuse, and prevent future crime.

- **Representative Eric Pettigrew**

Representative Pettigrew led the efforts in the House to fully fund an evaluation of the state's efforts to address racial disproportionality in the foster care system. Because of Representative Pettigrew's commitment to children of color in foster care,

and his insistence that our state take the next steps to address disproportionality, our state will continue to be held responsible for remedying the over-representation of children of color in the state's care.

- **Representative Skip Priest**

Representative Priest was a member of the Basic Education Finance Task Force, which recommended the inclusion of early learning for at-risk children in the definition of basic education. During the legislative session, Representative Priest pushed for implementation of this recommendation via the Basic Education Reform Bill, House Bill 2261. While this section was vetoed by the Governor, Representative Priest remains committed to including early learning under the state's responsibility for basic education.

- **Representative Larry Seaquist**

Representative Seaquist sponsored and championed the Apple Health for Kids Act (HB 2128). Representative Seaquist worked with his peers in the House and Senate to pass a comprehensive bill that will draw down additional federal funding, streamline enrollment for uninsured children, keep children covered, and track health outcomes to improve access to care. Representative Seaquist also helped champion the efforts to fund outreach to inform families about Apple Health for Kids and how to get health care for their children.

- **Representative Pat Sullivan**

Representative Sullivan championed funding to continue waiving the co-pay for reduced-price meals for children in low-income families. Representative Sullivan led efforts in the House to retain over \$10 million to make sure that children could count on food at school and throughout the summer in this time of economic crisis. Additionally, as the prime sponsor of the Basic Education Reform Bill (HB 2261), Representative Sullivan pushed tirelessly for the inclusion of early learning in the new definition of basic education and succeeded in building support for early learning programs within the Legislature.

- **Senate Majority Leader Lisa Brown**

Majority Leader Brown showed leadership in the Senate by securing full funding for Apple Health for Kids in both the early budget bill (HB 1694) and the final budget. Even in a tough budget year, Senator Brown ensured that we continued progress toward health coverage for all children by 2010.

- **Senator Claudia Kauffman**

Senator Kauffman fought tirelessly for the rights of children of color in the foster care system and other state institutions that are disproportionately failing children of color. She was the prime sponsor of Remediating Racial Disproportionality in Child Welfare Practices, Senate Bill 5882, to ensure the state takes the next steps to address disproportionality in foster care.

- **Senator Karen Keiser**

Senator Keiser rallied support in the Senate for the Apple Health for Kids Act (HB 2128), and worked across chambers in the House to develop and pursue policies to

find and enroll uninsured children. Senator Keiser championed efforts in the Senate to pass a strong version of HB 2128 that will help provide excellent health care for children in the Apple Health for Kids program.

- **Senator Joe McDermott**

Senator McDermott continued his long-standing commitment to feeding hungry children. In a tough budget climate, Senator McDermott championed efforts in the Senate to make sure that funding to eliminate the co-pay for reduced-price lunch for the youngest children in elementary school and breakfast in all grades was retained. He also helped maintain funding for the summer food program.

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The Children's Alliance is a statewide public policy advocacy organization that works at the local, state and federal level to ensure that all children have the things they need to thrive. Current campaigns focus on health care, anti-hunger and nutrition, foster care, and early learning. Our membership includes 125 organizations and more than 9,000 individuals statewide who are members of our Children's Action Network. To learn more about the Children's Alliance, go to www.childrensalliance.org