



June 7, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House of Representatives
1233 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senate Majority Leader McConnell and House Speaker Ryan:

On behalf of the Epilepsy Foundation, we urge you to carefully consider the impact Senate Bill 2979/House Resolution 3 would have on American children. S. 2979/H.R. 3 seek to rescind \$7 billion in funding from the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which provides health insurance for 8.9 million children through Medicaid and separate CHIP programs administered by the states. For children in working families that earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but too little to purchase private health insurance, CHIP is a lifeline to medical care. Cuts to CHIP were proposed in the Administration's original rescission report, and have not been amended by the recently released revision. By rescinding these critical funds, Congress would undercut the security the CHIP program affords to children and families across the nation, and to the states administering the program.

The Epilepsy Foundation is the leading national voluntary health organization that speaks on behalf of at least 3.4 million Americans with epilepsy and seizures. We foster the wellbeing of children and adults affected by seizures through research programs, educational activities, advocacy, and direct services. Epilepsy is a medical condition that produces seizures affecting a variety of mental and physical functions. Approximately 1 in 26 Americans will develop epilepsy at some point in their lifetime. For people living with epilepsy, timely access to appropriate, physician-directed care, including epilepsy medications, is a critical concern. Epilepsy medications are the most common and cost effective treatment for controlling and/or reducing seizures. To delay, change, limit, or deny access to medications could be extremely dangerous.

As you are aware, earlier this year Congress passed—and the President signed—a law authorizing funding for CHIP for an additional 10 years. In passing the 10-year extension of CHIP, Congress acted on a bipartisan basis to provide stability for the program that states, families, and providers sought. The bills signed by the President that extended CHIP for 10 years protect coverage for children, give families peace of mind, and enable states to make investments that strengthen and improve their CHIP programs. Rescinding such a substantial sum from CHIP would undermine the very program Congress intended to strengthen.

Two billion dollars of proposed cuts would come from the Child Enrollment Contingency Fund. This "rainy day fund" was established to help prevent states from running out of money. Before the Contingency Fund was established, a state would be left on the hook for additional funding if there were higher than expected enrollment numbers during a given year. Congress decided to act and provided children with an added layer of protection within CHIP—the Contingency



Fund. These contingency dollars can be made available in states if they experience an unexpected surge in enrollment, which can result from any number of circumstances from natural disasters to economic downturns to public health crises. States have previously turned to this fund for help, and rescinding the program would undermine the very assurances it sought to create.

The proposal also seeks to cut \$5 billion from the Children's Health Insurance Fund. While these funds are unobligated balances, they are critical nonetheless. Over the last several years, Congress has come to bipartisan agreements about how to reallocate this budget authority to allow for investments in other programs that serve children. Unobligated funds have been used in recent years to offset other critical health programs; without that reallocation, those programs could suffer. Rescinding these funds may not have an immediate impact on states' CHIP programs, but it violates the bipartisan agreement in Congress to manage these funds in ways that continue to help low income children and families.

We urge you to carefully consider the impact S. 2979/H.R. 3 would have on the 8.9 million American children who rely on CHIP—and the assurances afforded to the state by the Contingency Fund—for their health care needs. Please do not hesitate to contact Abbey Roudebush, Government Relations Manager at our national office at 301-918-3784 or aroudebush@efa.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip M. Gattone".

Philip M. Gattone, M.Ed.
President & CEO
Epilepsy Foundation

CC: The Honorable John Cornyn, Majority Whip
The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Minority Leader
The Honorable Dick Durbin, Minority Whip
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Majority Leader
The Honorable Steve Scalise, Majority Whip
The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Republican Conference Chairwoman
The Honorable Luke Messer, Republican Policy Committee Chairman
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader
The Honorable Steny Hoyer, Minority Whip
The Honorable James Clyburn, Assistant Democratic Leader
The Honorable Joseph Crowley, Democratic Caucus Chairman