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3,000 Police Chiefs,  
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September 26, 2007

Dear Senator:

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS is a national anti-crime organization of more than 3,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, district attorneys, and victims of violence who have come together to take a hard-nosed look at the research about what really works to keep kids from becoming criminals. The law enforcement leaders of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS know from the front lines in the fight against crime—and the research—that investments in children’s health are critical to our nation’s public safety. The State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) can help ensure that kids with behavioral or emotional problems get the treatment they need—preventing later violence and saving taxpayers money. **We are pleased that the Senate will be considering a strong SCHIP reauthorization bill tomorrow, which is very similar to the SCHIP bill passed by the Senate 68-31 in August, and we urge you to support this legislation.**

Current data regarding children and mental health presents an alarming picture: at least one in ten children suffer from a serious mental health problem, but only about 21% of children in need of mental health services receive them. In particular, children and youth from low-income families are at-risk for mental health problems: 2 out of 10 low-income children and youth ages 6 through 17 have mental health problems. Although most youth with untreated mental health problems don’t become criminals, research shows that youth with untreated mental health needs are more likely to get in trouble and jeopardize public safety. Mental health services covered by SCHIP can help ensure that behavioral and emotional problems and mental illness are identified and treated as early as possible, reducing later crime. For example, the evidence-based “Functional Family Therapy” cuts juvenile recidivism in half and saves the public an average of \$32,000 per youth treated.

We are pleased that reauthorization includes funding to help cover an additional 3.8 million eligible, but uninsured low-income children who would not otherwise have access to these critical services. We are also very pleased that the legislation includes a requirement for states that offer mental health services to provide benefits that are equivalent in scope to benefits for other physician and health services.

**We urge you to support the SCHIP bill.** We look forward to working with you to achieve enactment of strong SCHIP reauthorization legislation that can save lives and save money, and make our communities safer.

Sincerely,

David S. Kass  
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Vice President

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