

By: Capelo

H.C.R. No. 81

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The Texas Cooperative Extension at Texas A&M
2 University reports there are 1.4 million uninsured children living
3 in Texas, representing 25 percent of all children in the state;
4 according to data available in 2000, Texas had the second highest
5 rate of uninsured children in the country, exceeding the national
6 average by more than two times; and

7 WHEREAS, Contributing to this high rate of uninsured children
8 is the fact that 28.6 percent of Texas children live in families
9 with income below the federal poverty guidelines, while 51.4
10 percent of the total live in families earning below 200 percent of
11 poverty income levels; in addition, health care costs have risen
12 dramatically in the past few years, resulting in higher insurance
13 premiums and making affordable coverage difficult for low-income
14 families to find; and

15 WHEREAS, While the rising cost of health care has hindered
16 the ability of parents to purchase private insurance coverage for
17 their families, it has also stymied the ability of many employers to
18 provide coverage for their employees, let alone the employees'
19 families; for example, it costs \$2,100 a year to purchase insurance
20 for an individual employee through the state's pool for small
21 businesses and more than \$5,200 a year to insure the employee's
22 whole family; for an employee earning \$7 an hour, this increases the
23 cost of employing that person by 15 to 37 percent; and

24 WHEREAS, Given these increased costs, it is not surprising

1 that affordable health insurance is conspicuously unavailable to
2 many working parents; 88 percent of uninsured children in Texas
3 have parents who work part-time, and 63 percent have a parent who
4 works full-time, during all or part of the year; and

5 WHEREAS, Aiming to reverse these disturbing trends, the
6 United States Congress enacted the state Children's Health
7 Insurance Program in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997; this landmark
8 legislation allocated \$40 billion in federal matching funds over 10
9 years to states that implemented a children's health insurance
10 program; and

11 WHEREAS, Recognizing the urgency of the situation and
12 responding to the action of the congress, the 76th Texas
13 Legislature passed Senate Bill 445 implementing the Texas
14 Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP); Texas CHIP provides
15 comprehensive health care coverage to children newborn through 18
16 years of age who are not eligible for Medicaid and who live in
17 families with a net income at or below 200 percent of the federal
18 poverty guideline; and

19 WHEREAS, Senate Bill 445 provided that Texas CHIP be funded
20 with the first money available each fiscal year as a result of the
21 Comprehensive Settlement Agreement and Release filed in the case of
22 *The State of Texas v. The American Tobacco Co., et al*; in state
23 fiscal year 2002, Texas received more than \$530 million in tobacco
24 settlement funds; and

25 WHEREAS, With the recent economic downturn threatening the
26 financial security of Texas families and further jeopardizing the
27 ability of parents to provide health insurance for their children,

1 Texas CHIP has become more critical than ever to the health and
2 well-being of Texas children; now, therefore, be it

3 RESOLVED, That the 78th Legislature of the State of Texas
4 reaffirm its intention that the tobacco settlement money available
5 each fiscal year be used to fully fund Texas' Children's Health
6 Insurance Program.