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May 6, 2008

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your continued interest in healthcare issues. I wanted to let you know that the Healthy Start Reauthorization Act passed the Senate unanimously last week. This bipartisan legislation, which I introduced last summer with Senator Burr from North Carolina, would improve prenatal and newborn health in the U.S. by reauthorizing the Healthy Start program. The specifics of the bill are outlined in the press release below. To find out more about what I'm doing to make sure every Ohioan has access to healthcare, feel free to visit my website: <http://brown.senate.gov> or please feel free to call my DC office at 202-224-2315 or an Ohio office toll free at 888-896-OHIO.

Sincerely,

*Sherrod Brown
United States Senator*

Brown Announces Senate Passage Of Healthy Start Legislation

Washington - U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) announced Senate passage late last night of his bipartisan legislation to reauthorize the Healthy Start program. Healthy Start is administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and its mission is to reduce infant mortality, low birthweight, and racial disparities in these key public health issues.

"Healthy Start is essential in helping our nation's most disadvantaged children survive infancy and live longer, healthier lives," Brown said. "Healthy Start does more than just help pregnant women cope with pregnancy; it is there for women regardless of their financial or living situation. This bill advances the public health and promotes the common good."

The Healthy Start program began in 1991, however its authorization lapsed at the end of FY 2005. The legislation introduced by Brown and Senator Richard Burr (R-NC) reauthorizes the program for five years and updates the funding level to better reflect current needs. Healthy Start operates in 97 communities in 37 states and has been successful in reducing infant mortality. Healthy Start programs exist in areas where the infant mortality rate is above 150 percent of the national average.

This legislation would include new projects to accelerate progress in reducing infant mortality. The bill would include a 20 percent increase in funding for the Healthy Start program, authorizing it at \$120 million.

While the U.S. is the wealthiest nation in the world, it ranks 28 among industrialized nations for infant mortality, cites the World Health Organization. Low birth weight is one of the main contributors to infant mortality and disproportionately affects low-income communities. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, high rates of infant mortality disproportionately affect African Americans, where there are 14 deaths for every 1,000 infant births, compared to 5.7 deaths for every 1,000 births among whites.

Healthy Start is rooted in a community-based approach to address infant mortality including initiatives

that engage social workers, medical providers, and members of the entire community. One of the main goals of Healthy Start is to help ensure women receive prenatal care during the first trimester of pregnancy.



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