

KPBS San Diego

Locals Urge Washington to Up Children's Health Insurance Funding

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Kenny Goldberg

Congress is getting set to debate how much money to spend on the state children's health insurance program called S-CHIP. Forty San Diego clergy and community leaders are in Washington this week to urge lawmakers to open up the federal wallet. KPBS reporter Kenny Goldberg has the story.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates S-CHIP needs an additional \$15 billion over five years to keep enrollments at their current levels. But President Bush has proposed just under \$5 billion in new funding over five years. Jeremy Kaercher is with the San Diego Organizing Project, a multi-faith group. He says the president's plan would cause 250,000 California children to lose their health insurance.

Kaercher: We, as people of faith, believe that that is not moral -- that our values dictate that we should care for the kids, and they should be able to access healthcare, regardless of their parents' means.

Kaercher says lawmakers like to talk about making children's health insurance a priority. He says it's time for them to do so.

Kenny Goldberg, KPBS News.