



United Way of the Bay Area

Press Release

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New Poll Shows 83% of Voters Overwhelmingly Support Proposals to Ensure All California Kids Have Health Insurance

Survey Commissioned by United Ways of California Shows Uninsured Children a Top Concern for Voters

SAN FRANCISCO, May 18, 2006 – The United Ways of California released the results of a statewide survey today, which showed that California voters are deeply concerned about the number of uninsured children in this state and voters overwhelmingly support proposals to cover all kids in the state. At a time when Governor Schwarzenegger and the legislature have proposed additional funding for local county health initiatives (CHIs), the poll also found strong voter support for the local CHI model, including support for additional state funding for CHIs.

The statewide survey of 800 likely California voters was conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research between May 4-11, 2006, and has a margin of error of +/-3.5%.

“This poll demonstrates what United Way has known from our broad-based outreach on children’s health issues: Californians are deeply concerned about the problem of uninsured children and they support solutions to cover all kids,” said Mark Walker, president of United Ways of California. “These survey results should send a clear message to every elected official in this state: covering kids isn’t just good public policy, it’s also good politics and something the voters overwhelmingly support.”

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An executive summary of the survey results is available upon request. Among key findings:

- **Voters are deeply concerned about the number of children without health insurance and overwhelmingly support solutions to cover all kids.**
 - 68% of those surveyed said they are extremely or very concerned about children not having health insurance. Levels of concern about the problem of uninsured children matches voters' concerns about high-profile issues like the quality of public schools (67%) and the price of gas (72%).
 - 83% of voters said they support a state proposal to “ensure every child has health insurance,” ranking it higher than any other proposals tested in the survey, including “increase funding for K-12 education” (75% support).
 - After being read a description of a specific proposal -- including that it would cost \$400 million annually -- two thirds (67 percent) continue to support a proposal to cover all kids.
 - 75% of voters agree with the statement that “1 million children in California without health insurance is too many and we should make sure every child in California has health insurance.”

- **Voters believe covering all kids is a goal within reach and something the State can afford.**
 - 72% of voters believe covering all kids is “realistic and doable”.
 - After again being told the cost (\$400 million annually or \$11 per person per year), two-thirds (66%) agree California “can afford to implement this plan”.
 - 74% favor spending a portion of the \$4 billion in unanticipated state revenues on ensuring that all children in California have health insurance.

- **Voters support the CHI model and support additional funding to keep local CHIs afloat and operative.**
 - At a time when Governor Schwarzenegger recently proposed \$22.8 million in additional funding for local Children’s Health Initiatives (CHIs) as part of his state budget, and when the Legislature has also proposed funding for local CHIs, voters expressed support for the CHI model as well as support for additional funding.
 - After being read a description of CHIs, 70% said this is a good model for the state to follow in providing health insurance for all children.
 - 74% of voters say the state should provide funding to existing countywide CHIs to keep the programs going.

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United Way's Covering California's Children project urges a long-term, statewide solution to sustain the success of the local children's health programs currently operating in 18 counties. The United Ways of California and local United Ways are also strong advocates of finding a statewide solution to cover all kids in this state. United Ways are working closely with local community and business leaders, legislators and others to promote this achievable and important goal.

"The poll shows voters believe covering all kids is an important priority that can and should be addressed by our state policymakers," said Maya Garcia, United Way of the Bay Area's regional coordinator for the Covering California's Children initiative. "United Way of the Bay Area will continue to work with elected officials and members of our community to ensure that one day soon we can achieve the goal of covering all California's children."

"United Ways of California and United Way of the Bay Area are thrilled the Governor and the Assembly proposed \$22.8 and \$50 million, respectively, to support coverage for all children," said Vena Ford, United Way of the Bay Area health program officer. "By supporting the successful local children's health programs, our policymakers are acknowledging the need to support a system of coverage for all children. "

Locally, United Way of the Bay Area continues to support the work and success of CHIs in San Mateo, San Francisco, Marin, Napa and Solano County, as well as the Covering California's Children Project. Local CHIs continue to make an invaluable difference in the lives of uninsured and under-insured children in the Bay Area. Because of United Way of the Bay Area contributions and support to our partners and grantees, more than 25,000 children have been insured and are able to access the care necessary for them to live healthy and happy lives.

About United Way of the Bay Area

United Way of the Bay Area is one of the largest private funders of health and human services in Northern California. Our mission is to be the catalyst that enables people to strengthen their communities by investing in one another. Through the Bay Area Community Fund, United Way is helping prevent poverty through targeted investments in early childhood development, affordable health care, youth violence prevention and increasing opportunities for the working poor. For more information, please visit www.uwba.org.

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