

Fellow Georgia Congressmen Lewis, Marshall, Scott, Bishop, and Johnson cosponsor legislation

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Washington, DC - With news that the State of Georgia will now use its Medicaid dollars to cover PeachCare's \$131 million shortfall, 12th District Georgia Congressman John Barrow (D-Savannah) today introduced new legislation that would reimburse the state, without requiring PeachCare to lower its eligibility requirements or kick covered kids out of the program.

"My bill will plug the current PeachCare shortfall and reimburse every Medicaid dollar that Georgia borrowed today," Barrow said. "But it will also prevent the state from being required to cut eligibility in the future."

Cosponsored by fellow Georgia Congressmen Lewis, Marshall, Scott, Bishop, and Johnson, Barrow's bill, H.R. 1489, would cover the SCHIP shortfalls currently facing 14 states. Unlike a similar proposal introduced last week by Georgia Congressman Nathan Deal, Barrow's legislation does not require states like Georgia to cap enrollees or reduce the state's current enrollment criteria in order to receive shortfall funding.

"Some of my colleagues assume that the shortfall facing PeachCare was created because the state did too much to help insure too many, and that the original intent of PeachCare was to help only the poorest of the poor." Barrow said. "That's just wrong. The poorest of the poor already have Medicaid, and they aren't the ones who benefit from PeachCare.

PeachCare was created to help children in families who work for a living but still can't afford to buy health insurance."

The original intent of the SCHIP program was to give states the funding and flexibility to help insure as many children who are not eligible for Medicaid as possible. That flexibility has allowed Georgia to offer affordable health care to over 270,000 children.

Barrow emphasized that Congress has an immediate responsibility to fix the current SCHIP funding shortfall facing states like Georgia, and fix the broken funding formula that allows states to sit on unspent SCHIP funds. Barrow currently serves on the Energy and Commerce Committee, which will be responsible with reauthorizing the SCHIP program later this year.

"When my committee takes up SCHIP reauthorization later this year, I will fight any bill that tries to take away a state's right to help as many kids as they can."

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