

**MARCH 21, 2001**

**STATEMENT OF U.S. REPRESENTATIVE JAN SCHAKOWSKY IN SUPPORT OF THE IMMIGRANT CHILDREN'S HEALTH IMPROVEMENT ACT**

**CHICAGO, IL - The Census has shown us what we have known all along - Chicago has a growing and vibrant immigrant population that has contributed so much to the cultural richness and economic growth of our city. We now have an opportunity to give the immigrants of our city what they deserve.**

**That is why I will urge all my colleagues to support the Immigrant Children's Health Improvement Act. This bill will correct a gross inequity in the 1996 immigration reform law that has resulted in young children not receiving the health care they deserve and pregnant mothers being denied the medical care they so desperately need. This bill gives states the option to use federal funds to provide needed health care coverage to pregnant immigrant women under Medicaid and to immigrant children under either Medicaid or CHIP.**

**This legislation is about fairness to hundreds of thousands of immigrants who work hard, play by the rules, and pay federal taxes. It is about providing needed care to young boys and girls and giving them the best chance to grow up to be healthy and productive members of the community. It is about preventive medicine and reducing health complications.**

**This bill is also about giving pregnant mothers basic prenatal care so that their sons and daughters are ready to greet the world as healthy as can be. It's about peace of mind. And it is about telling the rest of the world that we are a nation proud of our immigrants and their immeasurable contributions to our society. This bill is about ending an unjust double standard.**

**I wish to commend ICIRR for all for its leadership in the community and for providing immeasurable service to immigrant communities throughout Illinois. I look forward to working with ICIRR and others in bringing equity and fairness to our nation's immigrants.**