

June 22, 1999

WELFARE REFORM LETTER TO THE EDITOR CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 6/22/99

Letters to the Editor
Chicago Tribune
Chicago, IL

Dear Editor:

The June 14, 1999, editorial "Welfare Reform's Good Report Card," failed to make the grade. The editorial did not mention in any detail the detrimental impact of the welfare reform bill on the hundreds of thousands of low-income families who lost their health insurance and are now without any medical coverage.

A study released in May of this year by Families USA examined the link between welfare reform and the loss of health insurance. According to the findings, in 1997, the first year of implementing the new reforms, 675,000 low-income people became uninsured as a direct result of welfare reform. Even more staggering, out of the 675,000 people who lost their health insurance, 62% were children under the age of 19.

This is only the tip of the iceberg. In the next three years, as more individuals and families reach their lifetime limit on receiving welfare, millions more will lose coverage.

Already, 44 million Americans are without health insurance. We cannot stand idly by while more families join the ranks of the uninsured. It is time for bold solutions. It is time for the United States to join the rest of the industrialized nations and make a national commitment to universal access to health care for all its citizens.

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Sincerely,

Jan Schakowsky (D-IL)
Member of Congress □