F RIDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2007

November 10: Rusty Johnson’s “American Dreams Concert”; Hoyt Sherman Place, Des Moines; Proceeds to Iowa Friends of Foster Children Foundation; tickets on sale October 1st at www.hoytsherman.org

November 17: ADOPTION SATURDAY; Polk County Courthouse; Des Moines.

November 29-30: Statewide CAPTA (Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act) Training; sponsored by the Iowa Supreme Court’s Children’s Justice Initiative; Free CLE (12 hours, including 1 hour of ethics is anticipated).

S-CHIP Update: As reported earlier, the U.S. House of Representatives fell 13 votes shy of the two-thirds majority needed to override President Bush’s October 3rd veto of the bill to renew the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Lawmakers have now drafted a revised compromise bill (HR 3963). The new compromise bill has now passed the House by a vote of 265-142. The bill will now go to the U.S. Senate. If passed, the President who has vowed to veto the compromise bill as well.

This is the third time that members of the House have voted on legislation to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program, and the fourth time the House has passed legislation to reauthorize SCHIP this year. The House first voted on S-CHIP on September 25—the bill was passed with a bipartisan majority. On October 18, the House voted to override President Bush's veto of the bill, while it again passed by a bipartisan majority, it fell 13 votes short of the 2/3 necessary. On October 25, the House
approved a revised version of S-CHIP, again by a bipartisan majority, which included new provisions to address some concerns expressed by House Republicans. As in the previous version, this revised bill would increase funding for child health coverage by $35 billion over the next five years and make policy changes resulting in one-third of the country’s uninsured children getting health coverage.

According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the new version of the bill would continue to cover nearly 4 million uninsured children by 2012 and would cost $35 billion over five years. The cost of the program increase would be offset by an increase in federal tobacco taxes.

**Maine Decision on Gay Adoptions:** According to an article in the Bangor (Maine) Daily News, on August 30, 2007, the Maine Supreme Judicial Court reversed a Cumberland County Probate Court decision and ruled unanimously that a lesbian couple in Portland could petition the court to adopt the foster children they had been caring for since 2001. The justices found that Maine law speaks only to adoption by married couples, and does not specifically prohibit same-sex and unmarried opposite-sex couples from adopting children. The Maine high court held that state law has never barred joint adoption by unmarried people of the opposite sex and always has required married couples to adopt jointly. However, the appellate court also held that Maine probate court judges’ interpretations of the adoption laws, as well as tradition, have been barriers to adoption by unmarried couples.

The final determinations on adoptions will be up to the state’s 16 county probate judges who are required to base their decisions on what is best in each individual case.

**Disparity in Foster Care:** A publication by the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago entitled “Racial Disparity in Foster Care Admissions” was released in September, 2007. That report contained the following data concerning disproportionate minority representation among children placed in foster care:

- While African American Children make up only 15% of the children in the United States, they account for roughly 37% of children in foster care (a relative disparity of 2.43).
• The disparity for African American children is higher for infants. The risk of placement for African American infants is three times that of white infants.

• Disproportionality rates vary among states from 1.56 to 5.46.

"It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope." -- Robert F. Kennedy.