

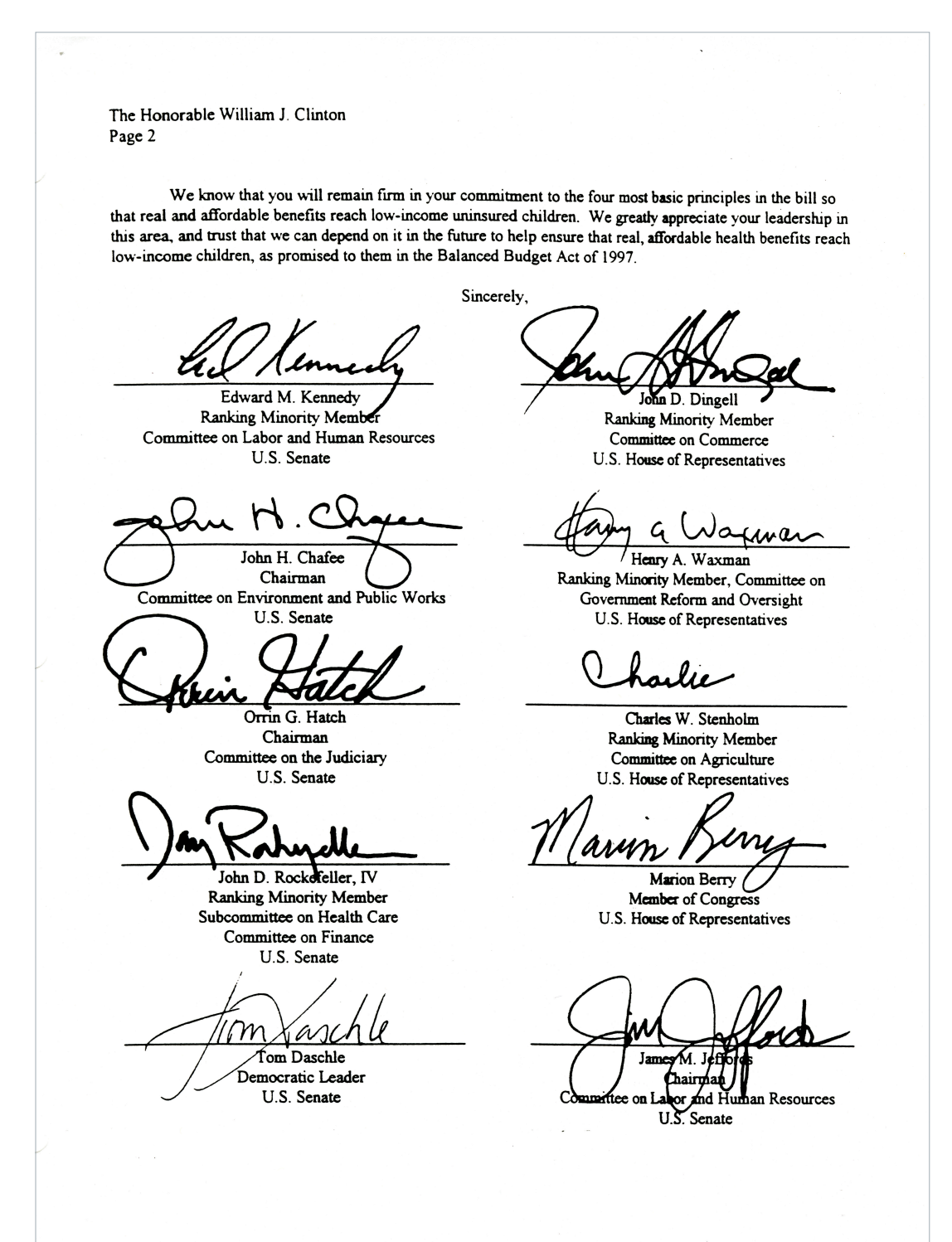
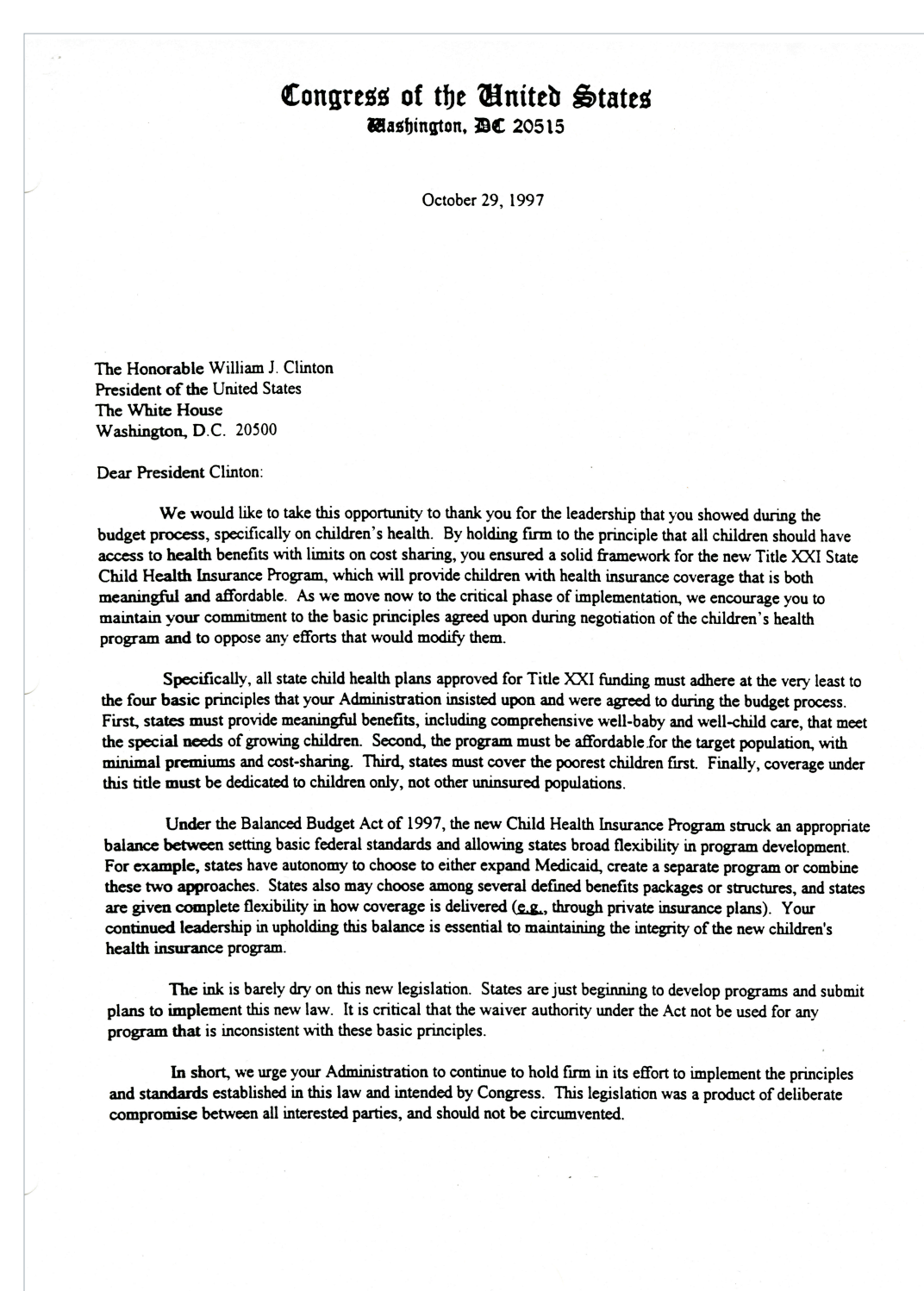


IMPLEMENTING THE CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

On August 5, 1997, President Clinton signed CHIP into law in the Balanced Budget Act. It expanded children's health insurance coverage with \$48 billion in new funding over 10 years, authorizing funds until 2007. States had the option to use the funds to expand Medicaid, create a new program, or both. Though money became available on October 1, 1997, many states were not able to access the allotment until legislatures convened to approve children's health initiatives. By the year 2000, all 50 states and the District of Columbia had implemented children's health programs.

The West Virginia State Legislature voted to enact the federal legislation in March 1998. Several states, including West Virginia, faced challenges enrolling children in the new programs. Some parents were unwilling to participate because the program was thought of as welfare and left families feeling stigmatized. Officials worked hard and creatively to underscore that the program was for working families. Between 1997 and 2012, CHIP reduced the number of uninsured children by more than 4 million, from 15 percent of all children to 9 percent, according to a 2014 report of the Pew Charitable Trusts.

For the rest of his career, Senator Rockefeller defended funding for CHIP and introduced a number of measures to improve the program. During the 2009 Affordable Care Act debates, some called for eliminating CHIP, but Rockefeller worked to negotiate a reauthorization. The 2009 reauthorization provided federal funds to cover shortfalls and increased costs, improved the dental and mental health benefits of plans, and gave states the option to cover pregnant women. It also extended funding for CHIP until 2015. CHIP is funded through fiscal year 2017, and the 115th Congress must decide the future of the program.



Above: Members of Congress asked President Clinton to uphold the standards for children's health care.

Right: A 2007 pro-CHIP advertisement that ran in Roll Call magazine listed the support of numerous organizations.

Below: Senators Rockefeller and Max Baucus (D-MT) conversed during a 2009 Finance Committee hearing on the Affordable Care Act.



“Senator Rockefeller has worked for many, many years on these issues and I am personally grateful for all his leadership and hard work in this endeavor. He is a true hero when it comes to America’s children.”

Senator John Chafee, Congressional Record – Statements on Introduced Bills, April 30, 1997