

House Passes SCHIP Expansion Bill

Last Updated Wednesday, 26 September 2007

International Premium Cigar &

Pipe Retailers Association (IPCPR)
Federal Legislative

News Update

United States: House Passes SCHIP Expansion Bill; Vote Not Veto-Proof

September 26, 2007- In a 265-159 vote, which falls short of the two-thirds majority required to override a promised veto by President George Bush, the US House of Representatives on September 25th passed a bill to expand the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) by \$35 billion over five years funded by increases in the Federal excise tax on cigarettes by 61 cents per pack (to \$1 per pack) and on other tobacco products by comparable amounts. Forty-five Republicans voted for the bill, but many of their colleagues voted against the expansion, siding with President Bush, who criticized the bill for its cost, its reliance on a tobacco tax increase and its potential for replacing private insurance with a taxpayer-funded program. To overturn a veto, both chambers of Congress must produce two-thirds majorities. Although the Senate is expected to shortly pass the SCHIP expansion plan by a large margin, a Senate override bid would be meaningless if the House does not have enough votes for an override. The 159 House votes against the bill is believed to be enough of a cushion for President Bush to sustain his veto, since few representatives are likely to switch positions. Enacted in 1997, SCHIP provides coverage for 6.6 million uninsured children from families with incomes too high to qualify for Medicaid but not high enough to pay for private coverage. The proposed expansion would increase coverage by 4 million children. Since SCHIP is set to expire on September 30th, congressional Democrats are planning for a temporary expansion of the current program (AP 9/26). (news provided by TMA)

