



# Senator Eliot Shapleigh

District 29

## Press Release

**Contact:**

Daniel Collins  
(915) 544-1990

[daniel.collins@senate.state.tx.us](mailto:daniel.collins@senate.state.tx.us)



---

### For Immediate Release

February 5, 2009

## SENATOR SHAPLEIGH FILES BILL TO EXPAND HEALTH COVERAGE TO TEXAS CHILDREN

*"Too many Texas children go without quality healthcare. With President Obama's signature on the SCHIP bill, we now have opportunity to provide that care. Let's make it happen."*

\*\*\*\*\*

**EL PASO** - Yesterday, President Barack Obama signed a bill extending the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) to include more than four million additional low-income children by 2013. The program already covers about seven million children. SCHIP is intended for children in families that earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but too little to afford private health insurance.

Since 2007 the House has tried unsuccessfully to pass the SCHIP expansion, but failed because of opposition and vetoes from the Bush White House. Successes like these are vitally important in Texas, a state with the highest percentage of uninsured children in the nation.

This 81st Texas Legislative Session, Senator Eliot Shapleigh, (D- District 29, El Paso) has filed [S.B. 577](#). The bill expands the state's child health plan program to include children under the age of 19 in families whose net income is at or below 300 percent of the federal poverty level.

"Too many Texas children go without quality healthcare. With President Obama's signature on the SCHIP bill, we now have opportunity to provide that care," Senator Shapleigh said. "Let's make it happen."

Under current law, families are only eligible if their income is less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level. A family of four making less than \$21,200 is said to be below the federal poverty level.

S.B. 577 also creates an option for families above the 300 percent limit to purchase health benefits under the child health plan program.

-End-