

PRESS RELEASE



State Representative Rachel Storch District 64



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Representative Rachel Storch Calls Cuts to Children's Healthcare an "Outrage."

Tens of Thousands of Missouri Children Could Lose Healthcare Coverage.

Representative Rachel Storch (D-St. Louis) spoke out today against new Missouri laws that jeopardize children's healthcare.

Based on SB 539, which was signed into law by Governor Blunt on April 26, 2005, families between 150-226% of the federal poverty level who cannot afford to pay a premium for MC+ can be terminated from the program. MC+ is Missouri's healthcare program for children, families, and pregnant women.

Under the new law, up to 47,000 children are subject to additional premiums. Updated figures show that 12,130 payments were received for October coverage. 12,388 invoices were unpaid. Because many of these families have more than one eligible child, this puts healthcare at risk for more than 20,000 children in these families.

"Healthcare for tens of thousands of Missouri children is in jeopardy based on Governor Blunt's Medicaid policies," said Rep. Storch. "Governor Blunt has claimed that children are his top priority. Now, he is promoting senseless policies that unravel Missouri's successful children's health insurance program," said Rep. Storch. "This does not make sense for our children and our families, and this does not make sense for our state."

The Department of Social Services had previously sent out letters to about 27,000 families notifying them of their new premium requirement.

"Sadly, we know that Governor Blunt's Department of Social Services foresaw the consequences of his new Medicaid policies," said Storch. "In the fiscal note that accompanied the Department's new regulations for SB 539, the Department stated that 'around 50% of the families/cases will not pay the premiums and will not participate in the program,'" noted Storch. "This is exactly what concerned Missourians predicted would happen if costly premiums were imposed on families who could not afford to pay them," said Storch. "Taking deliberate steps to drop children from our healthcare program is unconscionable."

Coverage will be terminated for all families unable to pay the premium. Families who failed to pay the premium timely may still pay their premium for October coverage. The date on which the payment is received is the date they would regain eligibility for coverage.

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