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## [Tough Road Ahead for CHIP Bill](#)

02.09.2010 by [Elizabeth Ziegler](#)

(KCPW News) There's a challenging road ahead for a bill that would eliminate the five-year period children of legal immigrants must wait before they can qualify for the Children's Health Insurance Program or Medicaid. In the bill's first committee hearing this morning, Republican Senator Allen Christensen said he understands the desire to help those in need, but he doesn't think the state should remove the waiting period.

"It was placed there for a reason and I can draw that line and say five years is a reasonable expectation that you will support yourself and be on your own and if you can't, then you ought to consider some other things, some other alternatives," said Christensen.

Congress originally enacted the waiting period in 1996 under the Welfare Reform Act, but removed it last year when re-authorizing CHIP. Now it's up to individual states to decide whether they'll continue with the waiting period or eliminate it.

Senate Bill 44, titled “Health Amendments for Legal Immigrant Children,” would cost the state an estimated \$1.8 million next year to insure about 800 additional children, though the bill’s supporters believe the cost is only half that figure. One of the children who would be impacted by the bill is Murray High School sophomore Ender Navarro, who has two more years to go before he qualifies for CHIP. He worries that an injury on the field could end his football career, and his hopes for a scholarship.

“Anything can happen in five years,” he said. “So, it’s a long time to wait for something that everyone needs.”

The legislation is sponsored by Democratic Salt Lake City Senator Luz Robles. She hopes it will have enough support to pass out of the committee at its next meeting.

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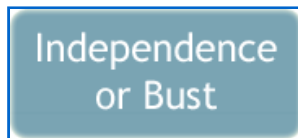
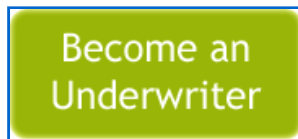
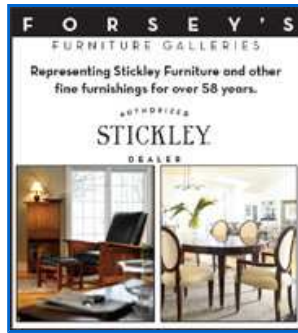


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