

## Murphy, State Leaders Champion Kids Vision Screening Program

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Hartford, CT -- Today Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) was joined by Speaker of the Connecticut House James A. Amann and Public Health Chair Peggy Sayers to promote a bipartisan bill in Congress that will create a grant program for states to receive needed funds for the vision care of uninsured children in Connecticut.

"It's simple - kids can't learn if they can't see. Early vision screening will make sure children are ready to learn when they enter school, and this federal funding will help states like Connecticut implement needed programs," said Murphy.

Murphy is cosponsoring HR 507, the Vision Care for Kids Act of 2007, which will create a grant program for the state to apply for federal funding for an existing state initiative championed by Murphy and his then Public Health Committee Co-Chair Rep. Peggy Sayers. Connecticut's program made school-based vision screening a priority through the mandated reporting of pediatric vision screening on the school health assessments forms.

"I am pleased to build on the vision screening programs created while I served in the State Senate. This federal bill will provide needed funding for follow up care when uninsured children are identified through our existing vision screening program," said Murphy.

The federal legislation gives priority to children under the age of nine, as children with vision problems can struggle developmentally, resulting in physical, emotional, and social consequences.

"Our children have a whole world to explore, and I want to be sure they have the gift of sight to do it. Our own Healthy Kids initiative has laid the foundation to build on the great programs we have in place, and this bill will go a long way to achieving our goal," said Amann.

"I am happy to see our Congressional delegation working to give us the needed funding to address the real health care needs of our constituents. This bill is welcome news as we work to ensure the health and well being of our children," said Sayers.

"These proposals bring vision care full circle by giving the state the tools necessary to ensure the treatment and follow through for uninsured children with vision disorders. I am honored to stand here today with these leaders and know we are making a difference in the lives of children who need it most," said Dr. Steven Thornquist, President of the Connecticut Society of Eye Physicians.