

## Bush opposes child healthcare expansion

*by UPI*

WASHINGTON -- U.S. President George Bush is opposed to expanding federal healthcare for impoverished children which has been proposed by his Republican allies. In an interview with the Washington Post, Bush said he would veto the proposed bipartisan Senate bill to put \$35 billion more into the State Children's Health Insurance Program over five years. The 10-year-old program now costs the government \$5 billion a year to care for about 6.6 million children in low-income families. But Bush said expanding the program would harm the private insurance sector. "My concern is that when you expand eligibility ... you're really beginning to open up an avenue for people to switch from private insurance to the government," Bush told the Post. Some of the funding for the proposed overhaul would come from raising the federal excise tax on cigarettes from 39 cents a package to \$1, which Bush said he also opposes.

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