

## Trillions in Spending, Billions for Babysitters?

### *"Nancy's Nanny-State" Enshrined in Legislation*

House Democrats on Friday released legislation that would create, expand, or extend 32 federal entitlement programs. The Republican Conference has prepared background on one of the new spending programs included in the bill.

- Section 1704 of the bill would create new grants to States to “improve the well-being, health, and development of children” by establishing government programs for home visitation. The bill would dedicate \$1.75 billion in federal matching funds for the program’s first five years, with additional funds to be provided by States.
- The bill lists several objectives for home visitation services to provide to parents, including “knowledge of age-appropriate child development...knowledge of realistic expectations of age-appropriate child behaviors; knowledge of health and wellness issues...skills to interact with their child to enhance age-appropriate development...[and] activities designed to help parents become full partners in the education of their children.”
- The bill language implies that many States already provide funding for home visitation services, which could cause some Members to question why the federal government should be asked to provide billions of dollars more.
- While the \$1.75 billion in potential federal funding for babysitters is intended to improve child health and wellness, several alternative forms of spending could have a positive effect on each of America’s 21 million children under age 5 at a lower cost to the federal government:
  - *Dr. Spock’s Baby and Child Care* (\$252 million);
  - Baby Einstein multi-pack DVD set (\$966 million);
  - Evening of free babysitting, based on the average cost of an experienced babysitter (\$1.26 billion); or
  - Graco baby stroller (\$1.68 billion).
- While the Democrat bill spends billions on visitation programs for children already born, it also delegates to a Health Benefits Advisory Council decisions about the components of mandated insurance coverage—which could imperil the lives of millions yet unborn by allowing a board of unelected bureaucrats to mandate that all Americans purchase coverage for abortion services, thereby increasing the number of abortions performed.

While supporting the improved health of America’s young children, many Members may be concerned by the Democrat bill’s prodigious spending in a time of trillion-dollar deficits. Moreover, at a time when press reports have already criticized Democrat attempts to expand the “[nanny state](#),” Members may question how a further expansion of this big-government approach to health care—with the federal government literally paying for nannies to care for young children—will actually be effective.

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#### STAFF CONTACT

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