

## Pharmaceutical Industry Spends More Than \$13M On Ads 'Thanking' Lawmakers Who Supported SCHIP Legislation

The pharmaceutical industry has paid \$13.2 million for television advertisements that "thank" 28 federal lawmakers -- 25 of whom are Democrats -- who supported the 2007 SCHIP expansion legislation, the *Wall Street Journal* reports. The ad campaign is "an example of how interest groups are already adjusting to the prospect of stronger Democratic control of Congress in 2009," and of how "after years of donating overwhelmingly to Republicans, the pharmaceutical industry is now splitting campaign contributions between the political parties," according to the *Journal*.

The thank-you ads were produced by the not-for-profit [America's Agenda: Health Care for Kids](#), which was founded in September and is funded solely by the [Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America](#) (Farnam et al., *Wall Street Journal*, 10/24). America's Agenda spokesperson Nicole Korkolis said the organization's three-member board "considered who supported [SCHIP] in the past and who might be under pressure to change their vote," adding, "The ads are designed to shore up that continued support" (Freking, *AP/Miami Herald*, 10/23).

According to the *Journal*, some of the lawmakers mentioned in the ads are in "critical positions to influence legislation" that would affect the pharmaceutical industry (*Wall Street Journal*, 10/24). While some of the Democrats singled out in the ads are not up for re-election this year, others are expected to win overwhelmingly, and the three Republicans singled out in the ads are in tight races for re-election (*AP/Miami Herald*, 10/23).

Doug Dority, president of the America's Agenda group, said, "I think [PhRMA] realized that the only way to have any serious respect by the vast population of people is to start working toward solving the health care problems." Ken Johnson, senior vice president at PhRMA, said, "The SCHIP ads are about good policy. We are trying to promote programs that encourage greater access to health care" (*Wall Street Journal*, 10/24).

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