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NONCAMPAIGN CAMPAIGN

It's campaign season, so of course you're seeing ads telling you what a great senator Harry Reid is.

But wait a second: Harry Reid's not on the ballot this year. So what's up with the ads?

Spots on local television and mailers sent to some local residents have praised Reid for his work on the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

The 30-second commercial, which has been airing on networks, shows family scenes as piano music plays and a female narrator says, "They look to us to protect them, teach them, tuck them in at night. But for parents without health insurance, a visit to the doctor could be more than they can afford. So in Congress, Harry Reid helped pass health care coverage for uninsured children."

The ads, which urge viewers to call Reid's office and "tell him to keep fighting to insure our kids," are sponsored by a group called America's Agenda: Health Care for Kids. The group, a nonprofit issue-advocacy group, gets most of its funding from the pharmaceutical industry, a spokeswoman said.

Nicole Korkolis said similar ads are airing in 30 regions around the country, targeting "various legislators who had voted (for the program) in the past, who we think may be under pressure to change their votes and need continued support."

Expansions of **SCHIP** were twice passed by Congress and vetoed by President Bush in 2007; the program is operating under a temporary extension that expires in March. Korkolis said the campaign is aiming to push the bill to the forefront of the agenda, if not during this Congress, then perhaps in the next session.

Reid had no idea the ads were coming but doesn't mind the free advertising, a spokesman said. "Frankly, ad campaigns like this are helpful because they help people understand what the issue is," Jon Summers said.

There's a lot going on in the Senate these days. But Reid is committed to getting **SCHIP** through before it expires, Summers said.

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