

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### CHILDREN'S HEALTH CARE

#### Family-values platform not reflected in policy

The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that the Iraq war costs the U.S. government \$10 billion monthly. The proposed federal children's health insurance bill would cost an estimated \$12 billion annually for five years. Cost is one of the main reasons given for the strong Republican opposition and promised Bush veto ("House passes children's health insurance bill," Wednesday P-1).

That the U.S. ranks low among industrialized nations in many measures of child health is evidence of a supposed family-focused Republican agenda that is not reflected in policy action.

This policy dissonance leads me to ask a few questions:

1. Why provide a publicly funded ("federalized") education to children of billionaires but not provide "federalized" health care to children of households earning less than \$100,000 annually?

2. Why can we have "federalized" health care for seniors but not "federalized" health care for children?

3. Why does "Leave no child behind" apply only to education and not to health care? Do healthy children not learn better than sick ones?

4. If cigarettes cost billions of health care dollars, is it not cost-effective to tax it to pay for basic health care for children? Or is the tobacco lobby deciding if children get health care?

**Ruth C. White, PhD, MPH, MSW**  
*Assistant professor, Social Work  
Seattle University*