



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT:** Anat Kelman Shaw, 713.664.4080  
[akelman@childrensdefense.org](mailto:akelman@childrensdefense.org)

## **Hundreds of Southeast Texas Youths March and Rally in Galveston for National Health Care Reform**

*State Representative Eiland, UTMB Physicians and Advocates Join CDF Freedom Schools® National Day of Social Action*

**Galveston, TX**—Monday, July 13, at 10:30 a.m., Children's Defense Fund (CDF)–Texas held a children's march and rally followed by a press conference involving more than 200 youths in Galveston around the issue of health care reform. They joined nearly 12,000 children in 27 states as part of the *CDF Freedom Schools* National Day of Social Action.

**"The well-being of our children is the most important investment we can make. By ensuring all children have access to health coverage, we safeguard our own future. It is exciting to watch the children turn lessons about advocacy into action, speaking out for themselves and others like them who typically are left out of the political process,"** said CDF-Texas Youth Leadership Development Director and Houston *CDF Freedom Schools* founder Brandi Brown.

The event was part of the Children's Defense Fund's annual [CDF Freedom Schools National Day of Social Action](#). Throughout the summer, youths across the country from the *CDF Freedom Schools* after-school reading and cultural enrichment program learn how to engage in community service and social justice advocacy. This part of the program is designed to instill a commitment to community engagement that will stay with participants for the rest of their lives. On Monday, the youths applied that lesson by taking action and raising their voices for health coverage for all children.

Press conference speakers included **State Representative Craig Eiland** (D-Galveston); **Galveston City Councilwoman Linda Colbert**; **Dr. Joan Richardson**, Chair of the Department of Pediatrics, University of Texas Medical Branch; **Dr. Jeff Temple**, Assistant Professor, University of Texas Medical Branch; **Jesse Romero**, Texas Director of HCAN; representatives of the Children's Defense Fund–Texas and children from *CDF Freedom Schools* sites in Beaumont, Houston and Galveston. Speakers addressed the difficulties facing uninsured children in Texas and the need for health care reform at the national level to include comprehensive, affordable and streamlined health coverage for all children. The event was held in Galveston, at the historic 1838 Michel B. Menard House, to focus special attention on the region's critical health care needs post-Hurricane Ike.

While elected officials on Capitol Hill are making crucial decisions right now to fix our broken health care system, thousands of children across the country are stepping up to make their voices heard. The *CDF Freedom Schools* scholars learned that by taking action they can make a difference in their communities, their country and their world and that together we *can* solve our health care crisis and provide comprehensive, affordable health coverage for everyone—especially children—this year.

**To view pictures of the event, visit:**  
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/cdffsnda/sets/72157621463754248/>

**About the CDF Freedom Schools® Program**

The *CDF Freedom Schools* program provides summer and after-school literacy and cultural enrichment for children ages five to 18. The program focuses heavily on reading, self-esteem, youth leadership, conflict resolution, and fostering a love of learning and a commitment to community service. *CDF Freedom Schools* sites also offer weekly parent workshops and volunteer opportunities and ensure that every child in the program has access to health and mental health resources, nutritious meals and a safe environment. In Texas, there are *CDF Freedom Schools* programs operating in Houston, Beaumont and Galveston

**About the Children's Defense Fund**

The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) is a non-profit child advocacy organization that has worked relentlessly for 35 years to ensure a level playing field for all children. We champion policies and programs that lift children out of poverty; protect them from abuse and neglect; and ensure their access to health care, quality education, and a moral and spiritual foundation. Supported by foundation and corporate grants and individual donations, CDF advocates nationwide on behalf of children to ensure children are always a priority.

The CDF Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start* and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

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