

## Palm Beach Post: Mahoney visits hospital, reads with kids

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PORT ST. LUCIE - U.S. Rep. Tim Mahoney visited doctors and children Friday to say that he and other Democrats will introduce another children's health care bill and work even harder to override President Bush's probable veto.

The House failed Thursday to override Bush's veto of a bill that would have expanded health-care coverage to millions of more children nationwide.

About 224,000 Florida children are covered, but that's only a portion of the 600,000 who need it, said Mahoney, D-Palm Beach Gardens.

"In St. Lucie County, 5,000 children are covered, but 15,000 need insurance coverage," he said. "Average incomes are dropping, and parents can't afford health insurance for themselves or their children."

Mahoney met with doctors at St. Lucie Medical Center who told him the hospital provided \$90 million worth of care last year to patients unable to pay for treatment.

Then he crossed the street to the Kindercare Learning Center to talk with children and read to a group of 4-year-olds.

He read Hooray for Pre-K, pausing to let the children finish each sentence.

The children gave him a book they had written about what they think a congressman does.

Their ideas include "a congressman plays video on his computer" and "a congressman looks out the window and watches the birds."

But Mahoney told them, "Freshman congressmen don't get windows."

A sentence about television prompted him to ask about their favorite show and if they watch CSPAN, the public affairs station that covers Congress.

Many seemed puzzled by the question, but some raised their hands.

"Are all of you Democrats?" Mahoney said.

"Nooo!" several kids shouted.

Despite that, the congressman and the kids seemed to enjoy their time together.