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Title: Need to exempt Service Tax on Health Insurance Scheme introduced by the Government of Tamil Nadu for the poor-laid.

SHRI A.K.S. VIJAYAN (NAGAPATTINAM): The Government of Tamil Nadu has introduced a pioneering health insurance scheme for the poorer sections of the society who can ill afford medical expenses. Under this scheme, one crore people have been identified to be the beneficiaries to begin with. On its part, Government of Tamil Nadu will be spending Rs. 517 crore towards annual premium for this insurance scheme covering the needy poor people. While issuing Insurance Identity Cards to the beneficiaries, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu pointed out that Rs. 48 crore of Service Tax to be levied on this premium amount for availing this service for the poor must be exempted. He has appealed to the Centre that for such a social welfare measure carried out by the Government, Service Tax exemption must be given so that the amount so saved now could be used by the Government of Tamil Nadu for other poverty alleviation programmes. So I reiterate the appeal made by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in public interest. I hope the Union Finance Ministry would positively consider this.