

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2447

To amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize funding for the establishment of a program on children and the media within the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to study the role and impact of electronic media in the development of children.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 19, 2004

Mr. LIEBERMAN (for himself, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. SANTORUM, and Ms. LANDRIEU) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize funding for the establishment of a program on children and the media within the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to study the role and impact of electronic media in the development of children.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Children and Media
5 Research Advancement Act” or the “CAMRA Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

2 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
3 ings:

4 (1) Congress has recognized the important role
5 of electronic media in children’s lives when it passed
6 the Children’s Television Act of 1990 (Public Law
7 101–437) and the Telecommunications Act of 1996
8 (Public Law 104–104), both of which documented
9 public concerns about how electronic media products
10 influence children’s development.

11 (2) Congress has held hearings over the past
12 several decades to examine the impact of specific
13 types of media products such as violent television,
14 movies, and video games on children’s health and de-
15 velopment. These hearings and other public discus-
16 sions about the role of media in children’s develop-
17 ment require behavioral and social science research
18 to inform the policy deliberations.

19 (3) There are important gaps in our knowledge
20 about the role of electronic media and in particular,
21 the newer interactive digital media, in children’s
22 healthy development. The consequences of very early
23 screen usage by babies and toddlers on children’s
24 cognitive growth are not yet understood, nor has a
25 research base been established on the psychological

1 consequences of high definition interactive media
2 and other format differences for child viewers.

3 (4) Studies have shown that children who pri-
4 marily watch educational shows on television during
5 their preschool years are significantly more success-
6 ful in school 10 years later even when critical con-
7 tributors to the child's environment are factored in,
8 including their household income, parents education,
9 and intelligence.

10 (5) The early stages of child development are a
11 critical formative period. Virtually every aspect of
12 human development is affected by the environments
13 and experiences that one encounters during his or
14 her early childhood years, and media exposure is an
15 increasing part of every child's social and physical
16 environment.

17 (6) As of the late 1990's, just before the Na-
18 tional Institute of Child Health and Human Devel-
19 opment funded 5 studies on the role of sexual mes-
20 sages in the media on children and adolescents sex-
21 ual attitudes and sexual practices, a review of re-
22 search in this area found only 15 studies ever con-
23 ducted in the United States on this topic, even dur-
24 ing a time of growing concerns about HIV infection.

1 (7) In 2001, a National Academy of Sciences
2 study group charged with finding solutions to Inter-
3 net pornography exposure on youth found virtually
4 no literature about how much children and adoles-
5 cents were exposed to Internet pornography or how
6 such content impacts youth.

7 (8) In order to develop strategies that maximize
8 the positive and minimize the negative effects of
9 each medium on children’s physical, cognitive, social,
10 and emotional development, it would be beneficial to
11 develop a research program that can track the media
12 habits of young children and their families over time
13 using valid and reliable research methods.

14 (9) Research about the impact of the media on
15 children is not presently supported through one pri-
16 mary programmatic effort. The responsibility for di-
17 recting the research is distributed across disparate
18 agencies in an uncoordinated fashion, or is over-
19 looked entirely. The lack of any centralized organiza-
20 tion for research minimizes the value of the knowl-
21 edge produced by individual studies. A more produc-
22 tive approach for generating valuable findings about
23 the impact of the media on children would be to es-
24 tablish a single, well-coordinated research effort with

1 primary responsibility for directing the research
2 agenda.

3 (10) Due to the paucity of research about elec-
4 tronic media, educators and others interested in im-
5 plementing electronic media literacy initiatives do
6 not have the evidence needed to design, implement,
7 or assess the value of these efforts.

8 (b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act to enable
9 the National Institute of Child Health and Human Devel-
10 opment to—

11 (1) examine the role and impact of electronic
12 media in children’s cognitive, social, emotional, phys-
13 ical, and behavioral development; and

14 (2) provide for a report to Congress containing
15 the empirical evidence and other results produced by
16 the research funded through grants under this Act.

17 **SEC. 3. RESEARCH ON THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF ELEC-**
18 **TRONIC MEDIA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF**
19 **CHILDREN.**

20 Subpart 7 of part C of title IV of the Public Health
21 Service Act (42 U.S.C. 285g et seq.) is amended by adding
22 at the end the following:

1 **“SEC. 452H. RESEARCH ON THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF**
2 **ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN THE DEVELOPMENT**
3 **OF CHILDREN.**

4 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Institute
5 shall enter into appropriate arrangements with the Na-
6 tional Academy of Science in collaboration with the Insti-
7 tute of Medicine to establish an independent panel of ex-
8 perts to review, synthesize and report on research, theory,
9 and applications in the social, behavioral, and biological
10 sciences and to establish research priorities regarding the
11 positive and negative roles and impact of electronic media
12 use, including television, motion pictures, DVD’s, inter-
13 active video games, and the Internet, and exposure to that
14 content and medium on youth in the following core areas
15 of child development:

16 “(1) COGNITIVE.—The role and impact of
17 media use and exposure in the development of chil-
18 dren within such cognitive areas as language devel-
19 opment, attention span, problem solving skills (such
20 as the ability to conduct multiple tasks or
21 ‘multitask’), visual and spatial skills, reading, and
22 other learning abilities.

23 “(2) PHYSICAL.—The role and impact of media
24 use and exposure on children’s physical coordination,
25 diet, exercise, sleeping and eating routines, and
26 other areas of physical development.

1 “(3) SOCIO-BEHAVIORAL.—The influence of
2 interactive media on childhood and family activities
3 and peer relationships, including indoor and outdoor
4 play time, interaction with parents, consumption
5 habits, social relationships, aggression, prosocial be-
6 havior, and other patterns of development.

7 “(b) PILOT PROJECTS.—During the first year in
8 which the National Academy of Sciences panel is summa-
9 rizing the data and creating a comprehensive research
10 agenda in the children and media area under subsection
11 (a), the Secretary shall provide for the conduct of initial
12 pilot projects to supplement and inform the panel in its
13 work. Such pilot projects shall consider the role of media
14 exposure on—

15 “(1) cognitive and social development during in-
16 fancy and early childhood; and

17 “(2) the development of childhood obesity, par-
18 ticularly as a function of media advertising and sed-
19 entary lifestyles that may co-occur with heavy media
20 diets.

21 “(c) RESEARCH PROGRAM.—Upon completion of the
22 review under subsection (a), the Director of the National
23 Institute of Child Health and Human Development shall
24 develop and implement a program that funds additional
25 research determined to be necessary by the panel under

1 subsection (a) concerning the role and impact of electronic
2 media in the cognitive, physical, and socio-behavioral de-
3 velopment of children and adolescents with a particular
4 focus on the impact of factors such as media content, for-
5 mat, length of exposure, age of child, and nature of paren-
6 tal involvement. Such program shall include extramural
7 and intramural research and shall support collaborative ef-
8 forts to link such research to other National Institutes of
9 Health research investigations on early child health and
10 development.

11 “(d) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—To be eligible to receive
12 a grant under this section, an entity shall—

13 “(1) prepare and submit to the Director of the
14 Institute an application at such time, in such man-
15 ner, and containing such information as the Director
16 may require; and

17 “(2) agree to use amounts received under the
18 grant to carry out activities that establish or imple-
19 ment a research program relating to the effects of
20 media on children pursuant to guidelines developed
21 by the Director relating to consultations with ex-
22 perts in the area of study.

23 “(e) USE OF FUNDS RELATING TO THE MEDIA’S
24 ROLE IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD.—An entity shall use
25 amounts received under a grant under this section to con-

1 duct research concerning the social, cognitive, emotional,
2 physical, and behavioral development of children as related
3 to electronic mass media, including the areas of—

4 “(1) television;

5 “(2) motion pictures;

6 “(3) DVD’s;

7 “(4) interactive video games; and

8 “(5) the Internet.

9 “(f) REPORTS.—

10 “(1) REPORT TO DIRECTOR.—Not later than 12
11 months after the date of enactment of this section,
12 the panel under subsection (a) shall submit the re-
13 port required under such subsection to the Director
14 of the Institute.

15 “(2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than
16 December 31, 2010, the Director of the Institute
17 shall prepare and submit to the Committee on
18 Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Sen-
19 ate, and Committee on Education and the Workforce
20 of the House of Representatives a report that—

21 “(A) summarizes the empirical evidence
22 and other results produced by the research
23 under this section in a manner that can be un-
24 derstood by the general public;

1 “(B) places the evidence in context with
2 other evidence and knowledge generated by the
3 scientific community that address the same or
4 related topics; and

5 “(C) discusses the implications of the col-
6 lective body of scientific evidence and knowledge
7 regarding the role and impact of the media on
8 children, and makes recommendations on how
9 scientific evidence and knowledge may be used
10 to improve the healthy developmental and learn-
11 ing capacities of children.

12 “(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
13 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this sec-
14 tion—

15 “(1) \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2005;

16 “(2) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2006;

17 “(3) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2007;

18 “(4) \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2008; and

19 “(5) \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2009.”.

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