

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

INTRODUCTION OF THE OBESITY PREVENTION ACT

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2003

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, in my career as Governor and as a Member of Congress, I have been fortunate to spend time in schools all across the State of Delaware. During my visits, I have recognized a growing and frightening trend where more and more children are becoming obese. Health, nutrition, and physical exercise professionals indicate that childhood obesity has become a national problem which is reaching epidemic proportions. For that reason, I am introducing the Obesity Prevention Act which aims to curb the rise of obesity among our nation's children.

The statistics are alarming: According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) there are nearly twice as many overweight children and almost three times as many overweight adolescents as there were in 1980. Based on the agency's 1999–2000 data, the percentage of children who are overweight has nearly doubled (from 7 to 13 percent) in the past two decades, and the percentage of adolescents who are overweight has almost tripled (from 5 to 14 percent.)

Dr. Nancy Krebs, chairwoman of the American Academy of Pediatrics' Committee on Nutrition found that over 60 percent of overweight children between 5 and 10 years of age already have at least one factor for cardiovascular disease.

The Surgeon General indicates that overweight children and adolescents are more likely to become overweight or obese adults.

The Surgeon General's Call To Action To Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity 2001 found that overweight and obesity are increasing in both genders and among all population groups. In 1999, an estimated 61 percent of U.S. adults were overweight or obese.

A recent analysis, underwritten by the CDC, found that the treatment of illnesses related to obesity costs America \$93 billion a year, rivaling the financial toll of smoking-related disease. Health care for overweight and obese individuals costs an average of 37 percent more than for people of normal weight, adding an average of \$732 to the annual medical bills of every American. We know a lot of children who are overweight grow up to be overweight or obese adults, and thus a greater risk for some major health problems.

For the vast majority of individuals, overweight and obesity result from excess calorie consumption and/or inadequate physical activity. Thus, a healthy diet and regular physical activity, consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, should be promoted. Although obesity-associated problems occur most frequently in adults, important consequences of excess weight as well as antecedents of adult disease occur in overweight children and ado-

lescents. It seems to me that we should be finding ways to help our children be healthy and fit. The Obesity Prevention Act, which I am introducing today, encourages activities to educate our nation's children about nutrition and promote physical fitness. This is accomplished with:

State Nutrition and Physical Fitness Projects—This title amends the National School Lunch Act to provide 20 state demonstration programs for the creation of model nutrition education and fitness programs for students. States may use funds, after consulting with others in state government and industry who have an interest in obesity treatment and prevention, for a variety of purposes. Unlike other programs, which function as national activities of the CDC and USDA, these grant programs will give a few states the opportunity to think comprehensively about the problem of childhood obesity—not just from a health or food perspective.

Local Nutrition and Physical Fitness Project—This title creates a new pilot program for 100 school districts—at least one in each state—to promote healthy eating habits and increase physical fitness. Local Education Agencies may use funds, after consulting with individuals who represent public health, nutrition and fitness organizations, for a variety of purposes.

State Children's Health Insurance Program Incentive—This section creates an incentive for states that have, as part of their state health insurance plan, activities to treat or prevent childhood obesity. This is an effective way to intervene early with an at-risk population.

Commission on Obesity Treatment and Prevention—The Commission will facilitate coordination between federal agencies and identify ways to streamline the process through which federal departments can aid in the treatment and prevention of obesity. Members include representatives from US Health and Human Services, USDA, US Department of Education, Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services, CDC, the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, National Institute of Health, and Surgeon General as well as representatives from private sector nutrition and public health organizations and food, fitness, and other appropriate industries. In addition, they must consult with state and local government, educators and community based organizations. They will meet at least twice annually and prepare a report on actions taken to treat and prevent obesity and make recommendations for legislative and regulatory action.

President's Health and Fitness Awards—This is a new section to recognize schools for overall fitness and demonstrated improvements in student fitness and nutrition awareness. In this way, we're not simply awarding athletes who are already fit but rather schools and students that are making progress toward fitness and health. Also, it provides an award for teachers or coaches who create innovative and effective fitness and nutrition programs.

Afterschool Programs—Finally, the bill adds nutrition and health education programs to the

list of allowable activities for afterschool programs.

The time for action is now. We need to promote innovative ideas to help our children stay healthy and fit. Children are the future of America, and we must help to ensure they understand the importance of healthy living. I am confident that the Obesity Prevention Act is a positive first step to help reduce and prevent obesity among children, and I ask my colleagues to cosponsor.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO BRADLEY RUSSELL

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I stand before you today to recognize an individual who exemplifies the spirit, determination, and resolve that constitutes the backbone of this great nation. Bradley Russell of Cortez, Colorado was involved in a severe automobile accident in July of 2001, forcing him to leave high school and engage in daily physical therapy. Bradley was diagnosed with a brain injury that has affected coordination, motor skills, strength, and endurance. Bradley's injuries were so severe that he was told he could never walk again. Bradley has been working diligently towards recovery with the goal of high school graduation firmly on his mind.

While Bradley knew his brain injury was serious, he set out from the beginning to accomplish his most important goal: walking across the stage at graduation. This goal caused him to work harder than he ever had before. Bradley was forced to overcome his lack of balance; his biggest fear was that he might fall. Bradley's doctors compared his rehabilitation with that of a newborn child; he was forced to learn numerous skills all over again. Bradley was lucky enough to have a caring support group helping him through his ordeal. He is also blessed with great parents who exemplify the compassion and love that wonderful parents across this nation show to their children. Tammy and Ron Russell lived outside of the hospital in a camper so that they could be by their son at all times. Tammy even quit her job so that she could be closer to her son.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly stand before this Congress today to express my respect and admiration for Bradley Russell. Bradley should be an example to us all, and I hope that his recovery continues to go well. Walking across the stage at graduation has become a reality for Bradley, an accomplishment of which he should be very proud. Today, May 22, 2003, the Seniors of Montezuma-Cortez High School are taking the next step in their lives; and Bradley Russell is right by their side.

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