

WASHINGTON, DC— Representatives Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) and Kay Granger (R-TX) today re-introduced the Childhood Obesity Reduction Act—a bill to encourage schools and school districts to develop and implement local, school-based programs designed to reduce and prevent childhood obesity, promote increased physical activity, and improve nutritional choices in young people.

“America loves to think of itself as a youthful nation focused on fitness,” said Hoyer. “But behind the exciting media images of robust athletes and Olympic dream teams is a troubling reality. Statistics portray a generation of young people that are, in large measure, inactive, unfit, eating poorly, and at an alarming rate, becoming obese.”

The Childhood Obesity Reduction Act establishes a Congressional Council on Childhood Obesity, which will work with outside experts to develop and evaluate plans for elementary and middle schools to reduce and prevent childhood obesity. The Council would also highlight successful obesity reduction plans and provide critical support to schools that seek to participate in these plans.

Under the bill, schools that have promoted successful, innovative strategies for obesity prevention or reduction will be rewarded with grants for strategy implementation.

“Obesity is rapidly becoming one of the most pervasive health threats to our society,” said Granger. “We now have 15 percent of our children considered to be obese. This is a huge red flag signaling a major problem that needs addressing. Intervention in our schools will equip young people with the knowledge to prevent obesity and live healthier and happier lives.”

A recent article in the Journal of the American Medical Association indicates that tobacco use and obesity – caused by poor diet and physical inactivity – are the number one and two causes of preventable death in the nation—435,000 and 400,000 people respectively each year.

“While our nation has undergone a collective focus to reduce tobacco use -- we have not done enough to put a stop to obesity,” Hoyer said.

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, overweight adolescents have a 70 percent chance of becoming overweight or obese adults. This increases to 80 percent if one or more parent is overweight or obese. Furthermore, overweight or obese adults are at risk for a number of health problems including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and some forms of cancer.

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