

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 579

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

MARCH 9, 2005

Mr. LIEBERMAN (for himself, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. SANTORUM, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. ENSIGN) 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 and adoles-
15 cents’ health and development. These hearings and
16 other public discussions about the role of media in
17 children’s and adolescents’ development require be-
18 havioral and social science research to inform the
19 policy deliberations.

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

1 chological consequences of high definition interactive
2 media and other format differences for child and ad-
3 olescent viewers.

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

11 (5) The early stages of childhood are a critical
12 formative period for development. Virtually every as-
13 pect of human development is affected by the envi-
14 ronments and experiences that one encounters dur-
15 ing his or her early childhood years, and media expo-
16 sure is an increasing part of every child's social and
17 physical environment.

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

1 (7) In 2001, a National Academy of Sciences
2 study group charged with studying Internet pornog-
3 raphy exposure on youth found virtually no lit-
4 erature about how much children and adolescents
5 were exposed to Internet pornography or how such
6 content impacts their development.

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 and adolescents is not presently supported
16 through one primary programmatic effort. The re-
17 sponsibility for directing the research is distributed
18 across disparate agencies in an uncoordinated fash-
19 ion, or is overlooked entirely. The lack of any cen-
20 tralized organization for research minimizes the
21 value of the knowledge produced by individual stud-
22 ies. A more productive approach for generating valu-
23 able findings about the impact of the media on chil-
24 dren and adolescents would be to establish a single,

1 well-coordinated research effort with primary respon-
2 sibility for directing the research 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 and adolescents’ cognitive, social,
13 emotional, physical, 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 AND ADOLESCENTS.**

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 AND ADOLESCENTS.**

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 and adolescent development:

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

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

1 eating routines, and other areas of physical develop-
2 ment.

3 “(3) SOCIO-BEHAVIORAL.—The influence of
4 interactive media on children’s and adolescent’s fam-
5 ily activities and peer relationships, including indoor
6 and outdoor play time, interaction with parents, con-
7 sumption habits, social relationships, aggression,
8 prosocial behavior, and other patterns of develop-
9 ment.

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

18 “(1) cognitive and social development during in-
19 fancy and early childhood; and

20 “(2) the development of childhood and adoles-
21 cent obesity, particularly as a function of media ad-
22 vertising and sedentary lifestyles that may co-occur
23 with heavy media diets.

24 “(c) RESEARCH PROGRAM.—Upon completion of the
25 review under subsection (a), the Director of the National

1 Institute of Child Health and Human Development shall
2 develop and implement a program that funds additional
3 research determined to be necessary by the panel under
4 subsection (a) concerning the role and impact of electronic
5 media in the cognitive, physical, and socio-behavioral de-
6 velopment of children and adolescents with a particular
7 focus on the impact of factors such as media content, for-
8 mat, length of exposure, age of child or adolescent, and
9 nature of parental involvement. Such program shall in-
10 clude extramural and intramural research and shall sup-
11 port collaborative efforts to link such research to other
12 National Institutes of Health research investigations on
13 early child health and development.

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

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

20 “(2) agree to use amounts received under the
21 grant to carry out activities that establish or imple-
22 ment a research program relating to the effects of
23 media on children and adolescents pursuant to
24 guidelines developed by the Director relating to con-
25 sultations with experts in the area of study.

1 “(e) USE OF FUNDS RELATING TO THE MEDIA’S
2 ROLE IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD OR ADOLESCENT.—An
3 entity shall use amounts received under a grant under this
4 section to conduct research concerning the social, cog-
5 nitive, emotional, physical, and behavioral development of
6 children or adolescents as related to electronic mass
7 media, including the areas of—

8 “(1) television;

9 “(2) motion pictures;

10 “(3) DVD’s;

11 “(4) interactive video games;

12 “(5) the Internet; and

13 “(6) cell phones.

14 “(f) REPORTS.—

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

20 “(2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than
21 December 31, 2011, the Director of the Institute
22 shall prepare and submit to the Committee on
23 Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Sen-
24 ate, and Committee on Education and the Workforce
25 of the House of Representatives a report that—

1 “(A) summarizes the empirical evidence
2 and other results produced by the research
3 under this section in a manner that can be un-
4 derstood by the general public;

5 “(B) places the evidence in context with
6 other evidence and knowledge generated by the
7 scientific community that address the same or
8 related topics; and

9 “(C) discusses the implications of the col-
10 lective body of scientific evidence and knowledge
11 regarding the role and impact of the media on
12 children and adolescents, and makes rec-
13 ommendations on how scientific evidence and
14 knowledge may be used to improve the healthy
15 developmental and learning capacities of chil-
16 dren and adolescents.

17 “(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
18 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this sec-
19 tion—

20 “(1) \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2006;

21 “(2) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2007;

22 “(3) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2008;

23 “(4) \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2009; and

24 “(5) \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2010.”.

○