

111TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 3852

To authorize grants to promote media literacy and youth empowerment programs, to authorize research on the role and impact of depictions of girls and women in the media, to provide for the establishment of a National Task Force on Girls and Women in the Media, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 28, 2010

Mrs. HAGAN (for herself and Mr. MENENDEZ) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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## A BILL

To authorize grants to promote media literacy and youth empowerment programs, to authorize research on the role and impact of depictions of girls and women in the media, to provide for the establishment of a National Task Force on Girls and Women in the Media, and for other purposes.

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       (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the  
5       “Healthy Media for Youth Act”.

1 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of  
 2 this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title.
- Sec. 2. Findings.
- Sec. 3. Grants to promote media literacy and youth empowerment programs.
- Sec. 4. Research on the role and impact of girls and women in the media on  
the development of youth.
- Sec. 5. National Task Force on Girls and Women in the Media.
- Sec. 6. Limitation.
- Sec. 7. Definitions.
- Sec. 8. Authorization of appropriations.

3 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds the following:

5 (1) Media has become an integral part of the  
 6 lives of youth. According to the 2010 study by the  
 7 Kaiser Family Foundation entitled “Generation M<sup>2</sup>  
 8 Media in Lives of 8- to 18-Year-Olds”, most 8- to  
 9 18-year-olds spend about 10 hours a day using rec-  
 10 reational media.

11 (2) Girls feel pressure from the mainstream  
 12 media to have an ideal body type, and only 34 per-  
 13 cent of girls report being very satisfied with their  
 14 bodies, according to the 2006 study by the Girl  
 15 Scout Research Institute entitled “The New Nor-  
 16 mal? What Girls Say About Healthy Living”.

17 (3) Sixty percent of teenage girls compare their  
 18 bodies to fashion models and almost 90 percent of  
 19 girls say the fashion industry places a lot of pressure  
 20 on teenage girls to be thin, according to the 2010

1 Girl Scout Research Institute report entitled “Girls  
2 and Body Image”.

3 (4) The 2010 Girl Scout Research Institute re-  
4 port “Girls and Body Image” found that body dis-  
5 satisfaction leads to unhealthy eating and dieting  
6 habits. Fifty-five percent of girls admit that they  
7 diet to lose weight, 42 percent of girls know someone  
8 their age who forced themselves to throw up after  
9 eating, 37 percent know someone who has been diag-  
10 nosed with an eating disorder, and 31 percent admit  
11 to starving themselves or refusing to eat as a strat-  
12 egy to lose weight.

13 (5) Fifty-four percent of young girls in grades  
14 3 through 5 worry about their appearance, and 37  
15 percent of such girls worry specifically about their  
16 weight, according to the 2006 Girls Inc. report enti-  
17 tled “The Supergirl Dilemma: Girls Grapple with  
18 the Mounting Pressure of Expectations”.

19 (6) A 2007 report of the American Psycho-  
20 logical Association’s Task Force on the Sexualization  
21 of Girls reported that 3 of the most common mental  
22 health problems among girls, eating disorders, de-  
23 pression or depressed mood, and low self-esteem, are  
24 linked to sexualization of girls and women in media.

1           (7) According to the 2007 report of the Amer-  
2       ican Psychological Association’s Task Force on the  
3       Sexualization of Girls, frequent exposure to  
4       sexualized media images of girls can have negative  
5       consequences on the sexual health of, and avoidance  
6       of sexual risk by, girls, including the dangerous, new  
7       phenomenon known as “sexting”, which means send-  
8       ing an explicit message or photo over a cell phone  
9       (referred to in this Act as a “sext”).

10          (8) The group AK Teens found that 30 percent  
11       of girls ages 9 to 15 have sent a “sext”. The Cam-  
12       paign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy found that 20 per-  
13       cent of youth ages 13 to 19 have sent partially or  
14       completely nude pictures of themselves or someone  
15       they knew over a cell phone.

16          (9) Competition over narrow beauty standards  
17       and attention from boys also damages friendships  
18       among girls, according to the report of the American  
19       Psychological Association’s Task Force on the  
20       Sexualization of Girls. Damaging friendships among  
21       girls can have serious health consequences since the  
22       relationships of girls are crucial to the social and  
23       emotional health of girls, according to the report of  
24       the Girl Scout Research Institute, “The New Nor-  
25       mal? What Girls Say About Healthy Living”.

1           (10) Sexualized messages and images of girls  
2           and women also negatively impact boys. These nega-  
3           tive effects include the development of unrealistic  
4           and unhealthy expectations of the physical appear-  
5           ance of girls and women, and may impair the ability  
6           of boys to develop healthy relationships with girls  
7           and women, according to a 2007 report of the Amer-  
8           ican Psychological Association’s Task Force on the  
9           Sexualization of Girls.

10          (11) Girls and women of color are dispropor-  
11          tionately absent from mainstream media. A 2010 re-  
12          port of the Girl Scout Research Institute entitled  
13          “Beauty Redefined: Girls and Body Image Survey”  
14          states that only 32 percent of African-American girls  
15          think the fashion industry does a good job of rep-  
16          resenting people of all races and ethnicities.

17          (12) Women and girls continue to be underrep-  
18          resented in leadership roles in the media. The Geena  
19          Davis Institute on Gender in the Media reports that  
20          less than 1 in 3 speaking characters in children’s  
21          movies are female. According to the 2007 report of  
22          the American Psychological Association’s Task  
23          Force on the Sexualization of Girls, only 10 percent  
24          of Sports Illustrated photographs published during a  
25          3-year period were of women. Fifty-seven percent of

1 music videos feature a woman portrayed exclusively  
2 as a decorative, sexual object.

3 (13) The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in  
4 the Media found that the majority of female char-  
5 acters in children's movies are praised for their ap-  
6 pearance or physical beauty rather than their per-  
7 sonality, intelligence, or other talents, and are often  
8 short-sighted and narrowly fixated on romantic rela-  
9 tionships that lack substantial connections or court-  
10 ships. Girls and boys watching children's program-  
11 ming may learn that beauty is an essential part of  
12 being female and critical for gaining attention and  
13 acceptance.

14 (14) The aspirations of girls are limited as they  
15 begin to associate power, acceptance, and success  
16 with physical appearance rather than academic or  
17 extracurricular achievements, according to the Amer-  
18 ican Psychological Association.

19 (15) Violence against women continues to be  
20 prevalent throughout media. The Parents Television  
21 Council reports that between 2004 and 2009, vio-  
22 lence against women and teenage girls increased on  
23 television programming at a rate of 120 percent,  
24 compared with the 2 percent increase of overall vio-  
25 lence in television content.

1           (16) The Parents Television Council warns that  
 2           the depiction of violence against women with increas-  
 3           ing frequency on television, or as a trivial, even hu-  
 4           morous matter, may be contributing to an atmos-  
 5           phere in which young people view aggression and vi-  
 6           olence against women as normative, even acceptable.

7           (17) Due to the alarming side effects of the ex-  
 8           posure of youth to negative messages about girls and  
 9           women in media, Congress supports efforts to ensure  
 10          that youth improve their media literacy skills and  
 11          consume positive messages about girls and women  
 12          that promote healthy and diverse body images, de-  
 13          velop positive and active female role models, and  
 14          portray equal and healthy relationships between fe-  
 15          male and male characters.

16 **SEC. 3. GRANTS TO PROMOTE MEDIA LITERACY AND**  
 17 **YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS.**

18          (a) MEDIA LITERACY.—

19           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award  
 20          grants to nonprofit organizations to provide for the  
 21          establishment, operation, coordination, and evalua-  
 22          tion of programs to increase the media literacy of  
 23          girls and boys, including by—

1 (A) educating youth on how to apply their  
 2 critical thinking skills when consuming media  
 3 images and messages;

4 (B) promoting healthy, balanced, and posi-  
 5 tive media depictions of girls and women among  
 6 youth; and

7 (C) countering the perpetuation and dam-  
 8 aging effects of narrow, restrictive gender roles,  
 9 stereotypes, and expectations, including the  
 10 sexualization of female children, adolescents,  
 11 and adults.

12 (2) ACTIVITIES.—Programs funded under this  
 13 subsection may include—

14 (A) education on analytical skills that pro-  
 15 mote autonomy and critical understanding of  
 16 how girls and women are depicted in the media;

17 (B) age-appropriate education about nega-  
 18 tive effects of the sexualization of female chil-  
 19 dren, adolescents, and adults;

20 (C) education about how traditional, re-  
 21 strictive gender roles can be perpetuated  
 22 through media;

23 (D) education about how depictions of girls  
 24 and women in the media can negatively affect  
 25 the body image of youth, the choice of role



1 models, relationships among girls, and relation-  
 2 ships and expectations between girls and boys;

3 (E) education on how to use media to posi-  
 4 tively influence others and to affect healthier  
 5 cultural norms and practices;

6 (F) education of parents, educators, and  
 7 other adults on how depictions of girls and  
 8 women in the media impact youth; or

9 (G) support for public or private partner-  
 10 ships that encourage businesses, advertisers,  
 11 the entertainment industry, and other media  
 12 content providers to promote media content  
 13 that—

14 (i) encourages healthy body images;

15 (ii) develops positive and active female  
 16 role models; and

17 (iii) portrays equal and healthy rela-  
 18 tionships between female and male char-  
 19 acters.

20 (3) REPORT.—The Secretary shall require each  
 21 grant recipient under this subsection to submit to  
 22 the Secretary a report for each grant period that—

23 (A) describes how grant funds were used;

24 and

1 (B) evaluates the effectiveness of the pro-  
2 gram funded through the grant.

3 (b) YOUTH EMPOWERMENT.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award  
5 grants to nonprofit organizations to provide for the  
6 establishment, operation, coordination, and evalua-  
7 tion of programs to support the empowerment of  
8 girls or boys in a variety of ways, including by—

9 (A) encouraging youth empowerment  
10 through extracurricular activities and programs;  
11 and

12 (B) supporting youth in a variety of ways  
13 that—

14 (i) develop self-esteem, skills, and tal-  
15 ents; and

16 (ii) celebrate characteristics unrelated  
17 to sexual appeal or physical appearance.

18 (2) ACTIVITIES.—Programs funded under this  
19 subsection may include programs to—

20 (A) assist youth in critiquing and rejecting  
21 sexualizing and objectifying messages within so-  
22 ciety;

23 (B) teach youth how to create and use  
24 media that contribute to social change, espe-  
25 cially in their communities;

- 1 (C) build confidence and self-efficacy;
- 2 (D) build leadership skills; or
- 3 (E) facilitate connections between girls and
- 4 women, and boys and men, as mentors.

5 (3) PRIORITY PROJECTS.—In awarding grants  
6 under this subsection, the Secretary shall give pri-  
7 ority to projects that are—

- 8 (A) focused in urban, rural, and other un-  
9 derserved areas;
- 10 (B) gender-specific;
- 11 (C) focused on a variety of populations, in-  
12 cluding racial and ethnic minorities and rep-  
13 resentatives of several socioeconomic status  
14 groups;
- 15 (D) culturally and linguistically appro-  
16 priate for the populations being served; and
- 17 (E) developed in collaboration with the  
18 long-term stakeholders.

19 (4) REPORT.—The Secretary shall require each  
20 grant recipient under this subsection to submit to  
21 the Secretary a report for each grant period that—

- 22 (A) describes how grant funds were used;
- 23 and
- 24 (B) evaluates the effectiveness of the pro-  
25 gram funded through the grant.

1       (c) MATCHING FUNDS.—In awarding grants under  
2 subsections (a) and (b), the Secretary may give priority  
3 to applicants who agree to provide matching contributions  
4 from non-Federal sources. Such contributions may be in  
5 cash or in kind, fairly evaluated, including equipment,  
6 training, curricula, or a preexisting evaluation framework.

7       (d) CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS.—A grant may be  
8 made under subsection (a) or (b) only if the applicant in-  
9 volved agrees to the following:

10           (1) Not more than 20 percent of the grant  
11 funds will be used for administration, accounting, re-  
12 porting, and program oversight functions.

13           (2) The grant will be used to supplement and  
14 not supplant funds from other sources for increasing  
15 the media literacy of, and empowering, youth.

16           (3) The applicant will abide by any limitations  
17 deemed appropriate by the Secretary on any charges  
18 to individuals receiving services pursuant to the  
19 grant. As deemed appropriate by the Secretary, such  
20 limitations on charges may vary based on the finan-  
21 cial circumstances of the individual receiving serv-  
22 ices.

23       (e) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date  
24 of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the  
25 Secretary shall prepare and submit to the appropriate

1 committees of the Congress a report on the grants award-  
 2 ed under subsections (a) and (b), including—

- 3 (1) a description of how the grant funds were  
 4 used; and
- 5 (2) an evaluation of the effectiveness of such  
 6 grants.

7 **SEC. 4. RESEARCH ON THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF GIRLS**  
 8 **AND WOMEN IN THE MEDIA ON THE DEVEL-**  
 9 **OPMENT OF YOUTH.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through the  
 11 Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Preven-  
 12 tion and in coordination with the Director of the National  
 13 Institutes of Health and the Director of the Eunice Ken-  
 14 nedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and  
 15 Human Development, shall review, synthesize, and con-  
 16 duct or support research on the role and impact of depic-  
 17 tions of girls and women in the media on the psychological,  
 18 sexual, physical, and interpersonal development of youth  
 19 in the following areas:

- 20 (1) How depictions of girls and women in the  
 21 media affect youth in the following areas of child-  
 22 hood development:
  - 23 (A) Cognitive areas such as mental health,  
 24 self-esteem, learning abilities, and problem solv-  
 25 ing skills.

1 (B) Physical areas such as diet, nutrition,  
 2 exercise, body image, substance abuse, and  
 3 sleeping and eating routines.

4 (C) Social behavioral areas such as rela-  
 5 tionships with peers, interactions with parents  
 6 and family members, aggression, high-risk be-  
 7 haviors, sexual behavior and development, and  
 8 positive social behaviors.

9 (2) How depictions of girls and women in the  
 10 media affect the perceptions of girls and of boys in  
 11 the following areas:

12 (A) The perceptions and attitudes of girls  
 13 about the abilities, equity, appearances, and  
 14 leadership potential of girls and of boys.

15 (B) The perceptions and attitudes of boys  
 16 about the abilities, equity, appearances, and  
 17 leadership potential of girls and of boys.

18 (3) How the sexualization and objectification of  
 19 girls and women in the media affects girls and boys.

20 (4) The impact of depictions of girls and  
 21 women in the media on the academic performance of  
 22 youth.

23 (5) The impact that depictions of girls and  
 24 women in the media has on girls and boys of diverse

1 racial and ethnic backgrounds and developmentally  
2 across age.

3 (6) How factors such as format, length of expo-  
4 sure, age of youth, and nature of parental involve-  
5 ment impact youth.

6 (7) How food marketing and obesity campaigns  
7 affect the body image, nutrition, and exercise of girls  
8 and of boys, especially among eating-disordered  
9 youth populations.

10 (8) Additional areas as designated by the Sec-  
11 retary.

12 (b) NO DUPLICATION.—The Secretary shall ensure  
13 that research activities under this section do not duplicate  
14 other Federal research activities.

15 (c) REPORTS.—Not later than 2 years after the date  
16 of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the  
17 Secretary shall prepare and submit to the appropriate  
18 committees of the Congress a report that—

19 (1) synthesizes the results of—

20 (A) research under this section; and

21 (B) other related research by the private  
22 or public sector, including the Federal Govern-  
23 ment;

24 (2) disaggregates such results by gender, race,  
25 and socioeconomic background;

1           (3) includes a compendium of key existing re-  
2       search on the role and impact of depictions of girls  
3       and women in the media; and

4           (4) outlines gaps in research on the role and  
5       impact of depictions of girl and women in the media  
6       and identifies areas where future research is needed.

7   **SEC. 5. NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON GIRLS AND WOMEN IN**  
8                           **THE MEDIA.**

9       (a) PURPOSES.—The Federal Communications Com-  
10   mission shall convene a task force, to be known as the  
11   National Task Force on Girls and Women in the Media,  
12   to develop voluntary steps and goals for promoting healthy  
13   and positive depictions of girls and women in the media  
14   for the benefit of all youth.

15       (b) MEMBERSHIP.—The Task Force shall include  
16   representatives of the media industry, nonprofit and  
17   youth-serving organizations, academia and research enti-  
18   ties, psychologists and other child health professionals,  
19   Federal agencies, and any other public or private entity  
20   designated by the Federal Communications Commission.

21       (c) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Task Force shall iden-  
22   tify—

23           (1) concerns with how the media regulated by  
24       the Federal Communications Commission portrays  
25       girls and women;



1           (2) the impact of negative depictions of girls  
2           and women on the development of youth; and

3           (3) voluntary steps and goals that the public  
4           and private sectors can take to promote healthy and  
5           positive media depictions of girls and women for the  
6           benefit of all youth.

7           (d) INITIAL MEETING.—The Federal Communica-  
8           tions Commission shall ensure that the Task Force holds  
9           its first meeting not later than 90 days after the date of  
10          the enactment of this Act.

11          (e) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date  
12          of the first meeting of the Task Force, the Federal Com-  
13          munications Commission shall submit a report to Con-  
14          gress that contains—

15                (1) the findings of the Task Force under sub-  
16                section (c); and

17                (2) recommendations for areas of improvement  
18                regarding depictions of girls and women in the  
19                media.

20       **SEC. 6. LIMITATION.**

21          Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the  
22          Secretary may not use amounts made available under this  
23          Act to conduct or support activities or programs that are  
24          duplicative of activities or programs otherwise carried out

1 through the Department of Health and Human Services  
2 or the Department of Education.

3 **SEC. 7. DEFINITIONS.**

4 In this Act:

5 (1) The term “media” includes television pro-  
6 grams, motion pictures, video games, music and  
7 music videos, the Internet, social media, digital video  
8 recorders, cell phones, magazines, newspapers, ad-  
9 vertisements, and other emerging technologies de-  
10 signed for communication, entertainment, education,  
11 or information.

12 (2) The term “Secretary” means the Secretary  
13 of Health and Human Services.

14 (3) The term “sexualization” means a cir-  
15 cumstance when—

16 (A) a person’s value comes only from his  
17 or her sexual appeal or behavior, to the exclu-  
18 sion of other characteristics;

19 (B) a person is held to a standard that  
20 equates physical attractiveness (narrowly de-  
21 fined) and personal value with appearing, act-  
22 ing, and being sexy;

23 (C) a person is sexually objectified, or  
24 made into a thing for others’ sexual use, rather

1           than seen as a person with the capacity for  
2           independent action and decisionmaking; or

3                   (D) sexuality is inappropriately imposed  
4           upon a person.

5           (4) The term “Task Force” means the National  
6       Task Force on Girls and Women in the Media con-  
7       vened under section 5.

8       **SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

9       For the purpose of carrying out sections 3 and 4,  
10   there are authorized to be appropriated, in addition to any  
11   other amounts available for such purpose, \$40,000,000 for  
12   each of fiscal years 2011 through 2015, of which—

13           (1) \$18,000,000 shall be allocated to the pro-  
14   gram under section 3(a);

15           (2) \$18,000,000 shall be allocated to the pro-  
16   gram under section 3(b); and

17           (3) \$4,000,000 shall be allocated to the pro-  
18   gram under section 4.

○