

Mr. Speaker, please, I urge Members to join me. Help end this tragedy. We cannot stand idly by while American children are being kidnapped and held by foreign governments, even if they are our friends. Bring our children home.

COMMENDING THE GIRL SCOUTS ON THEIR 90TH ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in recognition of the 90th anniversary of the Girl Scouts, an organization that has empowered girls to reach their full potential through partnerships with caring adults.

Since 1948, the Girl Scout Council of the Congaree Area of South Carolina has served girls from age 5 through 17 in Lancaster, Lexington, Sumter, Fairfield, Newberry, Richland, Saluda and Kershaw Counties, along with the city of Great Falls. With the dedicated leadership of President Ann Addy and Executive Director Pamela Hyland, the Congaree Area Council today boasts a membership of nearly 10,000. Nationally, the organization has grown to 3.6 million Girl Scouts, part of a worldwide family of 10 million in 140 countries.

The key to the success of the Girl Scouts is very simple: they have stressed the values that every person should strive to uphold. These values include integrity, respect, inclusiveness and responsibility to the community. Through the Scouts, girls learn that to realize true satisfaction in life a person must grow in mind, body and spirit.

IMPORTANCE OF MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, on yesterday I attended an event in Chicago, Illinois, that the Near North Health Corporation used to kick off Men's Health Week; and it was a very interesting event, because there were a number of high-profile men who spoke of their illnesses. But they also spoke of the fact that for many years they never went to see a doctor. They had no idea that they may have been experiencing the difficulty.

So their message was a very simple one, that if you are a man, like all other people, you really need to see your doctor. You need to check on your health. You need to make sure you get rid of the macho image that nothing can happen to you.

So I would just extend their message to all men throughout America: check on your health. This is Men's Health Week. You start with yourself.

SUPPORTING CREATION OF HOMELAND SECURITY DEPARTMENT

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, "turf," as everyone knows, is sacred in Washington, D.C., and the favorite parlor game in Washington D.C. is turf war. Every Member of Congress, every committee and agency fights hard to maintain their turf; and I am concerned that turf battles may impede what is best for our Nation.

This morning, I testified in support of H.R. 4660, a bipartisan bill to create a Secretary of Homeland Security and a Director to the National Office of Combatting Terrorism.

This legislation includes three main points. First, it gives budget authority to those in charge of protecting our Nation's homeland. Second, it provides Congress the oversight we must have over this new office. Finally, this legislation will reorganize government to allow better information-sharing both vertically and horizontally. As we proceed, Congress must be mindful that the safety of the American people is more important than the power struggles of a few agencies or Congressmen.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join in this important effort, move beyond turf battles, and do what is right for the American people.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record votes on postponed questions will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules, but not before 6:30 p.m. today.

SENSE OF HOUSE ON IMPROVING MEN'S HEALTH

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 438) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that improving men's health through fitness and the reduction of obesity should be a priority.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 438

Whereas the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service has identified obesity as a major health problem;

Whereas 61 percent of adults in the United States are considered overweight or obese, as indicated by a body mass index (the most reliable measure) of 25 or greater;

Whereas 300,000 deaths each year in the United States are associated with being overweight or obese;

Whereas the economic cost of obesity in the United States was about \$177 billion in 2000;

Whereas being overweight or obese puts people at a greater risk of heart disease, certain types of cancer, type 2 diabetes, stroke, arthritis, breathing problems, and depression;

Whereas men who are overweight are 50 percent more likely to have erectile dysfunction and men who are obese are 200 percent more likely to have erectile dysfunction;

Whereas fewer than a third of American adults engage in the recommended level of physical activity, which is 30 minutes, 3 to 4 times a week; and

Whereas the number of overweight and obese children has nearly tripled in the past two decades: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes that being overweight or obese is a major health concern in the United States;

(2) commends and supports the work of all organizations that are taking steps to combat this health problem;

(3) urges all governmental, State, and private organizations to do everything in their power to promote a healthy lifestyle; and

(4) pledges to take proactive steps to intensify its efforts to combat this health problem.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on House Resolution 438.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of House Resolution 438 to express the sense of Congress that improving men's health through fitness and reduction of obesity should be a priority. The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) is absolutely correct. Obesity is a major health problem for our society. We must help inform the American public about these risks so that they can take corrective actions to make changes in their food consumption and exercise behaviors.

Over 61 percent of U.S. adults are overweight, along with 13 percent of children. Approximately 300,000 American deaths a year are associated with obesity. What is frightening is that this trend is exponentially increasing. Since 1980, obesity among adults has doubled, and overweight children and adolescents have tripled. Americans need to know that being overweight places people at a higher risk for heart disease, cancer and stroke, all top killers in America, in addition to arthritis, breathing problems, and depression. New research has revealed that obesity can lead to Type 2 diabetes in children

as well. There is hope, however, because obesity is preventable. Americans should not needlessly place themselves at risk.

Personal responsibility is key to ending this trend. Most Americans recognize that exercise and a healthy diet helps one stay fit and trim. Dieticians have made it perfectly clear: one truly can eat any food in moderation and remain perfectly healthy, but Americans are choosing not to eat foods in moderation and are all too often short-changing vitamins and nutrients that are essential to fighting disease. Americans are also choosing not to exercise.

Americans have literally hundreds of options available to them to help lose weight and stay fit. We must help inform Americans about the risks that obesity imposes on their overall health and that fighting obesity will help save lives. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) for raising the level of attention on this important issue. I encourage my colleagues to vote in favor of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague's resolution highlights a public health issue that undoubtedly deserves more attention. Obesity is linked to a host of acute and chronic conditions and costs our health care system as much as \$100 billion every year. It is the second leading cause of unnecessary deaths in this country. Obesity can cause reproductive problems, pulmonary problems, osteoarthritis, liver disease, and can dramatically increase a person's risk for cancer and for diabetes. I do not doubt my colleague's sincere concern and desire to provoke a more serious Federal response to the obesity problem.

I look at H. Res. 438, at the title, Mr. Speaker, and it says "Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that improving men's health through fitness and the reduction of obesity should be a priority." That is what we are voting on today. My question is, as it has been with each of the health care-oriented resolutions we have considered this year, how does all this rhetoric about wanting to address health care issues align with what we are actually doing to address health care issues?

Again, this resolution, Mr. Speaker, says "Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives in improving men's health through fitness and the reduction of obesity should be a priority." Of course it should be; but, again, it is one more resolution begging the question: What is this House of Representatives doing when it comes to prescription drugs, when it comes to dealing with disparities between rich and poor in the health care that is delivered, when it comes to deal with any of the health care problems that we face?

□ 1415

The President's budget cuts funding for chronic disease programs at CDC, yet we have this resolution on the House floor. It is the very program that pays attention to public health issues like obesity. The President ostensibly proposed cuts like this one to make room for the \$665 billion price tag associated with making his tax cut permanent. Again, no money for an adequate prescription drug benefit; no real work on this issue, other than a resolution saying let us make it a priority.

Is this body going to restore the CDC funding so that we can really address the problems of obesity, or are we too wed to this tax cut that goes overwhelmingly to the richest people in our society? Are we going to target any funding to reducing the rates of obesity in this country? Where are the dollars going to come from, or are we just going to again pass a resolution that sounds real good that could help my friend from Pennsylvania in his fight for reelection because it looks good and we can send a news release out, but what does it really do, Mr. Speaker?

We have passed, largely along party lines, six pieces of legislation that dramatically reduce the Federal tax revenues available for existing public health initiatives, much less new ones like this. Six pieces of legislation, always overwhelmingly giving tax cuts to the richest people in this country. We have passed these six bills, yet we passed exactly one piece of legislation that would actually improve the public health, the bipartisan bioterrorism bill, approved last week to be signed by the President tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, we are draining trillions of dollars from the Federal coffers and, at the same time, pledging to do more to combat a host of public health problems, including obesity. Talk, Mr. Speaker, is cheap. If Congress could address public health problems just by talking about them, which seems to be what my Republican friends that run this Chamber seem to be all about, then there would be no public health problems. Each time we pass one of these resolutions, as meritorious as the subject matter may, in fact, be, we get away with talking about a significant issue rather than actually doing something about a significant issue. Somehow, this body feels justified in acknowledging that we need to do more, but never saying how we are going to do that, while draining the budget through tax cuts for the richest Americans after tax cut for the richest Americans.

I hope that every Member, Mr. Speaker, who votes for this resolution and pledges "to take proactive steps to intensify our efforts to combat this health problem" remembers that pledge and all of the other pledges when the next tax-cut-for-the-rich vote comes around.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY), a leader in, among other things, the battle for public health and public health awareness in this House.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York for yielding the time. I would just observe to my colleagues that it is not at all clear to me that the majority party's respect for personal and economic freedom and the desire for families to keep more of what they earn is in any way the cause of the numerous health problems, including the one we are going to discuss today.

I am glad that we are bringing this resolution to the floor. The reason we are picking this week is because it is the week leading up to Father's Day that is National Men's Health Week. House Resolution 438 expresses the sense of the House that improving men's health through fitness and the reduction of obesity should be a priority for all of us, and I feel strongly about that.

I should observe that National Men's Health Week is currently celebrating its eighth year. I want to recognize one of the driving forces behind this recognition, and that is Rodale Publishing in Emmaus, Pennsylvania and, specifically, Men's Health Magazine, one of Rodale's flagship publications, has really driven this message and elevated the level of awareness of the problems that plague men, in particular health care problems.

Back in 1993, Men's Health Magazine asked its readers to support a nationwide initiative to identify and treat health issues of particular interest to men. This public awareness campaign was spearheaded by the National Men's Health Foundation with the help of Men's Health Magazine. As a result of their efforts, Congress passed a bill in 1994 naming the week prior to and including Father's Day as National Men's Health Week. They designated this week as an opportunity to encourage preventive health behavior, as well as early detection of diseases that disproportionately claim men as victims. It is one week out of the year to have a focused public service campaign to educate men and their families about the importance of positive health attitudes, preventive health practices, and treatments of health problems for men. It is important because, after all, men do lag behind women by 6 years in average life expectancy.

This message of wellness and disease prevention and individuals taking control of their own lives for the betterment of their lives is a big part of the tradition at Rodale Publishing. Rodale's magazines include Men's Health, Prevention, Runner's World, Bicycling, and a whole host of magazines geared towards helping people to improve really the quality of their lives, often by improving their fitness.

I also want to take a minute to recognize the tremendous work being done

in this area by a friend of mine, Dave Zincenko, the editor in chief of Men's Health Magazine. Dave is clearly dedicated, as well as his colleagues, to helping men find ways to live longer, healthier, better lives, and he has been a driving force behind this recognition of men's health needs.

So every year, Men's Health Magazine has now focused its coverage on this week to some topic, some topic specific to men's health. Last year was prostate cancer, the second leading cancer killer in men, and this year it is obesity which, according to the Surgeon General, will soon overtake smoking as America's number one leading health concern.

This year, the magazine's editors have launched the "Million Pound Challenge." It is a campaign to help the men of America drop the weight that quite literally threatens their lives. Media outlets from Good Morning America and the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette have done major coverage of this nationwide campaign to lose this excess weight, and the resolution we are debating today specifically underscores this effort.

I think it is worth distinguishing between two terms that are sometimes used interchangeably. Being overweight is different from suffering from obesity. It is really largely a matter of degree, but being overweight simply indicates that a person's weight exceeds the normal or the average weight for a given body height and frame size that may often lead to health problems, but not necessarily so. Obesity, on the other hand, is the condition in which an individual has an excessive amount of body fat. It has been demonstrated that the average individual in this country will gain approximately 1 pound of additional weight each year after the age of 25. Such a seemingly small gain results in 30 pounds of excess weight by the age of 55 years, and since bone and muscle mass sort of naturally decrease in a person at a rate of approximately 1½ pounds each year due to a reduction in physical activity, the fat is actually increasing at a rate of 1½ pounds each year. So that means somebody over a 30-year period when they reach middle age is often faced with 45 pounds of excess weight in the form of fat. This leads to obesity and can lead to serious health problems.

As I said, the Surgeon General has identified obesity as a major health problem already. Sixty-one percent of adults in the United States are now considered overweight or obese. As my colleague from New York pointed out, approximately 300,000 deaths each year occur prematurely in the United States and they are associated with the condition of being overweight or obese.

The economic cost of obesity in the United States is staggering. It is approximately \$177 billion a year. Being overweight or obese puts people at a greater risk of a number of serious, life-threatening conditions, including heart disease, certain types of cancer,

type 2 diabetes, stroke, arthritis, breathing problems and depression.

So how do people combat obesity? Well, people become overweight and obese for a variety of reasons: dietary, some socioeconomic, some genetic, but mostly it is lifestyle factors, and the long-term solution requires the recognition of the benefits of a well-balanced, a well-proportioned, moderate diet and a commitment to regular physical activity. Those are really the two things that are necessary.

In short, it is moderation and it is control of a lifestyle that is the key to fitness and can help dramatically increase the likelihood of longevity in one's life.

Unfortunately, too many adults do not even get the moderate amount of exercise that can make a huge difference. More than 60 percent of U.S. adults do not engage in the recommended amount of physical activity, which is only 30 minutes 3 to 4 times a week, but so many of us find it so hard to squeeze that in. Approximately 25 percent of all U.S. adults are not active at all.

We are here today to encourage everyone to improve their lifestyles through fitness and nutrition and seek out the experts and organizations that can provide the help if people need that. I want to commend those organizations that are already hard at work at addressing this problem of obesity.

Because of the true national scope of the problem, I urge my colleagues to pass this resolution. The resolution simply resolves that the United States House of Representatives recognizes that being overweight or obese is a major health concern in the United States. It commends and supports the work of all organizations that are taking steps to combat this health problem. It urges all governmental, State and private organizations to do everything in their power to promote healthier lifestyles, and it pledges to take proactive steps to intensify its efforts to combat this health problem.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), who has been a leader in this and other issues like this.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy in allowing me to speak on this resolution.

I think it is important for us to spend a few minutes not just celebrating it in a verbal sense, but thinking about what Congress can do to step up to actually make it possible for citizens to lead more healthy lifestyles. We have already heard the statistics from my colleagues about obesity. We have heard about premature deaths. We have heard about problems that are related to that.

Well, I think it is pretty simple for us, because I was thinking about this as I rode my bicycle over to the Capitol to make this presentation. It is not rocket science to be able to deal with

making these programs successful. We ought to, first of all, focus here in this Congress by leading by example. If we know that a third of adults, less than a third of adults engage in recommended amounts of physical activity, what is it that we can do here to make a difference?

Well, first and foremost, we can do something to make sure that our communities are welcoming for people to exercise. I look at what has happened in Atlanta. The gentleman talked about obesity. Atlanta has seen the highest rate of increase in obesity. The Centers for Disease Control in the last decade was looking at that. What is the problem in Atlanta? Well, as part of their rapid expansion, the most rapid expansion in the history of human settlement, they have sort of left out things that make it possible for people to be physically active, like sidewalks, safe places to bicycle. The air is not healthy in Atlanta, and so people are complaining even if they had an opportunity to have the facilities to exercise, it would not be healthy to do so.

The Surgeon General has recommended that communities create safe playgrounds, sidewalks, walking trails, particularly in urban areas; that employers should provide time for workers to get physical activity on the job; that schools provide physical education on a daily basis in every grade.

What has this Congress done to advance those objectives? I would suggest not very much.

These advances really pay for themselves. The incremental costs per person, if we are going to talk about obesity, are higher than smoking and twice the cost of alcoholism. Employers pay an average of \$4,400 per year more for employee beneficiaries who have diabetes. The USDA has estimated that \$71 billion could be saved if inactive Americans become active.

Well, I would suggest that part of what we are doing here in Congress ought to be looking at those facilities around the country. We are going to soon be re-enacting the Surface Transportation Act. The physical environment has a tremendous impact, as I mentioned relative to Atlanta. St. Louis University has done a study of 17 new rural trails, and after the building of those trails, 60 percent of the trail users report they are more physically active than before the construction.

One of the things we do with the bicycle caucus as we are asking people to focus on it is to ask people to stop and reflect how many people in America right this minute are stuck in traffic on their way to ride a stationary bike in a health club. By providing the facilities that make it safe and convenient for people to get the over 150 million bicycles in this country out of the garages, out of the attics, out of the basements and put them on the street where people can use them, it is going to make a difference.

□ 1430

Think about in how many communities it is not safe for children to walk

or bike to school. A generation ago, 90 percent of the children could get to school on their own safely. Today, that ratio has reversed, where only 10 percent of the children can do that; and it means there is a rush hour twice a day because people are trying to get the kids off-loaded at school, as well as having the attendant congestion air quality problems and lack of exercise.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we in Congress ought to take the lead, it is something each Member of Congress can do, by scheduling two or three meetings, of which we have a gazillion every week. And maybe if we have two or three of them that are involved with walking or running, a meeting on the move, we will be healthier; they will probably be shorter; our constituents will like it; we will have less caloric intake; and I would think it would be an opportunity for us to help shape ourselves up, our staff, and the people that we work with.

Make sure that the next authorization of the surface transportation act, and if Members will remember, we had ISTEA in 1991, we had TEA-21 in 1997, and the next one ought to be green tea, where we have an opportunity to be able to make our communities more livable with that investment.

Last but not least, I would suggest that in the time our Committee on Ways and Means is involved with all sorts of tax changes, maybe one tax change they could make would be to make sure that pedestrians and bicyclists have the same commuter tax benefit as people who drive or take transit, a very simple change of very low cost, but would send the right sort of signals for people to be physically fit in our country.

I would suggest that Congress should not just pass a resolution, but we ought to lead by example and do something about it to make sure that our communities are more livable and that our families are safe, healthy, and more economically secure.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the intent of this sense of the House resolution on obesity and health. It is time to do more than pass this resolution, to do more than talk about this issue.

Until 2001, this Congress had never taken any substantial action to combat the most widespread health problem in the United States today: obesity and overweight. I worked with then chairman John Porter, now retired, chairman of the Committee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. He had an abiding interest in this issue.

Chairman Porter, before whom I testified on my own bill on this issue, put the first substantial funding to combat overweight and obesity, \$125 million. It is pathetic that I am calling \$125 mil-

lion substantial funding. That is only when measured by what we had done before, a couple or \$3 million every year.

But, Mr. Speaker, there was no money. After Chairman Porter put \$125 million, there was no money in the President's budget last year. I came to the floor, worked with the Committee on Appropriations, and we got something above \$68 million in. That is a little over half of what Chairman Porter left as his legacy: \$125 million.

Now we are in 2003, Mr. Speaker. Once again, there is no money in the administration's budget for overweight and obesity, our most widespread health problem. We have to do it again, Mr. Speaker, unless we are going to be satisfied with this resolution. I do not think even those who offered it would be satisfied with this alone.

The \$125 million is meant chiefly for combatting overweight and obesity among children. That is where the epidemic is the worst. Of course, that is where it is most preventable.

Chairman Porter agreed on the floor to incorporate sections of my own bill called LIFE, Lifetime Improvement in Health and Exercise. It had three sections, three rather commonsense sections:

First was training health professionals to recognize overweight before it becomes obesity. When people get to be obese, it is too late. It is very hard to come down, even from being overweight, much less obese. The health professions do not get in there early enough;

Secondly, strategies so people in their own workplaces and communities could begin on a mass schedule to incorporate exercise that people can do, that elderly people can do, that children can do, that harried middle-class working people can do;

Third, there is mass education. I am pleased to report, Mr. Speaker, that the first section of our bill is about to be under way this year. CDC, which was charged with this first \$125 million, is about to launch a 15-city tour where it will roll out this new mass education, which means ads we will see on television trying to get children and their parents off of the fast food that is among what is making them obese.

Our response this year, remember, is zero funding. I implore everybody who votes for this resolution to help us get money in the appropriation bill to prevent at least a dozen diseases we could all name ourselves. This epidemic involves every race, every economic background, and every age group. It is amazing the young people, young people in their teens and early twenties, that are deeply involved in this overweight and obesity problem.

Computers and cable made us all couch potatoes. We have an obligation, we and only we can do it, to assume leadership of the American people and try to get rid of this terrible epidemic. Only Congress can send a wake-up call to the American people to get out and exercise and get off the fast food.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 438, a resolution in support of improving men's health through fitness and the reduction of obesity.

This resolution is timely as we focus on Men's Health Week. The question of obesity in our children and men is very concerning. Since 1980, the percentage of children who are overweight has doubled. This has led to serious health consequences: Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, stroke, and in many instances, poor self-esteem among children.

The problem of obesity is magnified in African American and poor communities, where rates increased most in the last 10 years. It is estimated that the economic cost of obesity is more than \$100 billion a year, or 8 percent of the health budget.

In a number of States, legislators have introduced bills to tax soft drinks and restrict advertising to certain hours of the day. These bills in effect limit personal freedom and responsibility. I believe that we must begin to seriously encourage people to exercise and pay attention to their diet. As a matter of fact, in some places, people are beginning to say that it is time that we learn to eat to live and not live to eat.

I want to commend the Grocery Manufacturers of America for their efforts to begin to deal with the issue of obesity in a serious way. There are initiatives under way by Kraft and other food companies to make healthier products readily available. Additionally, they are looking at partnering with community-based organizations, churches and others, to spread the message that fitness and nutrition are two components to a long life.

So again, I commend the gentleman for his resolution and look forward to working with him and others. I also want to be associated with the comments made by the gentleman from Ohio. I do indeed believe it is time that this House does serious work towards elimination of health disparities.

But I believe that we have to move in a real way towards the ultimate development of a national health plan, one that provides quality, comprehensive health care for every American, without regard to their ability to pay. It is then and only then do I believe that we will become the healthy Nation that we have the potential of being.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would close on our side with a couple of comments. I support the resolution offered by my friend, the gentleman from Pennsylvania. I would hope that this resolution and discussions like this on the

floor, following up on the excellent comments of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS), lead to an examination of practices of those in this society who, by their actions, really promote obesity; not so much the people that ultimately pay the price of worse health and earlier death, but the fast food chains whose marketing techniques of biggie-size this and biggie-size that encourage especially our young people to drink more high-caloried soda pop and eat more French fries and eat more, ingest more calories.

Look at even the growing obesity of children in places like China, which had no obesity problems until we began to export the fast food industry to countries like that. I would hope that we would examine the practices of those who promote obesity, such as the marketers and the advertisers, who spend billions of dollars to encourage, again, especially children in bad eating habits, to eat unhealthy food.

Imagine on television a marketer writing ads, a marketer who is maybe paid \$500,000, using his or her skills to encourage a child to spend \$3 at a fast food restaurant. That is not exactly an even match.

Look at even our schools, Mr. Speaker, where now schools in this country, because we underfund schools, they go to the private sector, they go to soft drink companies; and those soft drink companies will pay a fee to those schools so they can bring their pop machines into the cafeteria.

I think we have all been in school-rooms where we have seen kids with a can of pop on their desk or walking down the hall with a soft drink. Some schools do not allow that, but too many do. When I was in school at Mansfield Senior High School, Mansfield, Ohio, 30 years ago, I remember the only vending machine in the cafeteria was an apple machine. Today we see soft drink machines in the cafeterias, in the halls, near the gyms. Because we underfund our public education, we have to give tax cuts in this institution to the richest people, so we underfund public education and then we force our schools to go out and make contracts with companies to bring pop machines in the schools, so leading those kids to more health problems in the future. That is really one of the reasons we have obesity in this country. It is all pretty tied together.

I hope this resolution in the future, and I plan to support the resolution of my friend, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, I hope it leads to an examination of the real issues surrounding this issue.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 438, expressing the sense of the Congress that improving men's health through fitness and the reduction of obesity should be a priority.

Physical fitness is key towards the prevention and reduction of obesity. As a nation we should encourage all men to continue to live an active life beyond their high school sports

and other extra curricula activity years and well into their retirement years.

It's hard to believe that in the age of technological advances there are still very simple steps we can take to improve our health. Experts agree that moderate exercise; just 30 minutes a day, 3 times a week can have a significant impact on health. That's just an extra 15 minutes in the morning and evening. Exercise such as walking can reduce your risk of chronic, disabling and often fatal diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular disease, depression, stroke and cancer. It can reduce and even eliminate dependence on medications resulting in a significant amount of cash savings. Furthermore, exercise improves mental alertness and fosters healthy muscles, bones and joints.

The technology of the 21st century has spoiled us. The World Wide Web has put the world at our fingertips. With our busy schedules we have grown dependent on the Internet for shopping, paying bills and even purchasing groceries. With a push of a button food is delivered directly to our homes.

Obesity is one of the biggest public health challenges in our time. The high number of uninsured individuals, the outrageous prices of prescription drugs and the down turn of the economy have forced us to take initiative and control over our health. The estimated medical cost for physically inactive Americans is \$77 billion. We must rely on cost-effective proven practices such as exercise that will contribute to the prevention and reduction of obesity.

That is why I support their resolution. Although technology has advanced by leaps and bounds our health has suffered by many of life's new conveniences. We are eating more, exercising less and becoming obese. H. Res. 438 does not expect our men to become triathletes rather it recognizes that physical activity is the key to reducing and preventing obesity.

I urge all of my colleagues to support H. Res. 438. I also encourage families, health professionals, businesses, community leaders, schools and universities to join in an effort to improve physical fitness through innovative approaches. Together we can join forces and conquer obesity and its cruel ramifications.

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 438, a sense of the House that improving men's health through fitness and reduction of obesity should be a priority. Obesity is a neglected public health problem in the United States. This disease affects approximately 51 million Americans and more than one quarter of all adults. The number of overweight and obese Americans has continued to increase since 1960. Unfortunately, this trend is not slowing down. Today, 61% of adult Americans (about 120 million) are categorized as being overweight or obese. While this resolution is focused solely on men's fitness and obesity issues, this epidemic transcends gender. While the prevalence of being overweight is higher for men (59.4%) than women (50.7%), the prevalence of obesity is higher for women (25.0%) than men (19.5%). Fitness and physical activity should be a priority for all Americans, regardless of gender.

Obesity is the second leading cause of unnecessary deaths. Each year, obesity causes at least 300,000 excess deaths in the U.S., and healthcare costs of American adults with obesity amount to approximately \$100 billion.

Obesity increases the risk of illness for about 30 serious medical conditions, including cancer, birth defects, cardiovascular disease, and stroke. Yet despite this correlation, obesity has not received the attention it deserves. Research is severely limited by a shortage of funds, and inadequate insurance coverage limits access to treatment.

Weight loss of about 10% of excess body weight is proven to benefit health by reducing many obesity related risk factors. Research has documented that physical activity is a key part of maintaining weight loss. Exercise can lower one's risk of heart disease and heart attack, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. A decrease in the amount of daily activity related to work, transportation and personal chores is believed to contribute to the high percentage of overweight and obesity today. By adding moderate physical activity, progressing to 30 minutes or more on most or preferably all days of the week to one's daily routine, we can start to reverse the upward trend of obesity.

Mr. Speaker, we should applaud those who live a healthy lifestyle and encourage our public health system to recognize obesity and inactive lifestyles as a true health care epidemic. Finally, as of this past fiscal year, the IRS announced a new policy stating that "obesity is medically accepted to be a disease in its own right." For taxpayers, this means that treatment specifically for obesity can now be claimed as a medical deduction. I hope that this promotion of healthy lifestyles will continue as we try to curb this epidemic, and that a tax deduction for individuals who choose to stay healthy will be considered seriously by the IRS.

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 438.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

HONORING THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF 19TH CENTURY ITALIAN-AMERICAN INVENTOR ANTONIO MEUCCI

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 269) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives to honor the life and achievements of 19th century Italian-American Inventor Antonio