

get ex-combatants into schools and jobs. After more than a decade of conflict, this is vitally important.

Now, Liberians in every part of the country are turning to President Sirleaf's government for things like clean water, electricity, health care, roads, and jobs. These are enormous challenges for the Government of Liberia, but they are also opportunities. They are opportunities to educate, to employ, to strengthen the rule of law, and to consolidate the peace. These opportunities are the bedrock of Liberia's great hope.

We have an opportunity also. It is an opportunity to partner with more than 3 million people as they rebuild their country from conflict, using the bricks and glue of peace. And it is an opportunity to demonstrate to all the people of West Africa—and the world—that greater riches flow from peace than from any form of violence.

In the last 2 fiscal years, Congress has appropriated almost \$900 million to reconstruction efforts in Liberia. Many Americans have participated personally in this noble work, through USAID, other government agencies, and many NGOs.

We must continue these efforts. President Sirleaf and the people of Liberia have embraced democracy and peace. We must embrace them as our friends.

NATIONAL SAFE PLACE WEEK

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I would like to publicly discuss the importance of the Project Safe Place Program and extend my support for designating the week of March 13, 2006, as "National Safe Place Week."

Project Safe Place is a nationally acclaimed youth outreach and education program that provides immediate help and support to youth who are in crisis or at risk for abuse, neglect, or serious family problems. This easily replicated community initiative, which takes place in more than 700 communities around the country, educates thousands of young people every year about dealing with difficult, threatening situations such as child abuse, substance addiction, crime, and family problems. Qualified agencies, trained volunteers, and community partners such as businesses, local government, and law enforcement agencies, work together to sustain Safe Places where youth in crisis can gain immediate, free, and confidential assistance. Safe Place sites, which are designated by distinctive yellow and black Safe Place signs, include youth-friendly businesses, schools, fire stations, libraries, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, and even buses.

S. Res. 390 provides an opportunity to recognize the youth-serving agencies, community partners, counselors, and trained volunteers who work together to sustain safe places for children to turn to. We can show them that they have our support and appreciation and that we value communities actively

working together to help young people in crisis.

Throughout my tenure as a legislator, I have done my best to support initiatives that work to improve child welfare. Our Nation's children are its greatest asset and our most precious treasure. It is vital that we help them get the right start, nurture their development, and provide for their well being. Quality childcare, nutrition programs, children's health initiatives, and overall poverty reduction measures are critical to ensuring that the children have the tools they need to grow up safe, happy, and healthy. Providing services for at-risk youth is particularly essential because these young men and women often do not have the support that would help them through the transition from childhood to adulthood. These services can help young people continue their education, find jobs, and improve family relationships.

I urge my colleagues in the Senate to join me in supporting this resolution. This resolution will affirm the work of those individuals and organizations sustaining Safe Places around the country and encourage them to continue making a difference in the lives of at-risk youth.

MICHAEL BERMAN

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, my dear friend of over 30 years, Michael Berman, has just written his memoir, "Living Large: A Big Man's Ideas on Weight, Success and Acceptance." Mike possesses one of the most astute political minds along with a generous heart and kind soul. I am proud of his courage in writing about his struggle with weight control and hope his book will encourage others to honestly confront and overcome their weight challenges.

This week, both The Washington Post and Roll Call reviewed Mike's book. I ask unanimous consent that those articles be printed at this point in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Roll Call, Mar. 14, 2006]

WEIGHING IN ON WEIGHT

(By Elizabeth Brotherton, Roll Call Staff)

Michael Berman is kind of a big deal.

Now president of the lobbying firm the Duberstein Group Inc., Berman has worked on every Democratic presidential campaign since 1964. He was even deputy chief of staff to former Vice President Walter Mondale.

That's on top of all the nonprofit boards he sits on.

But to Berman, there has been one lingering thing that has followed him all those years: his weight.

See, Michael Berman is kind of a big deal. "Food," Berman said. "It's like a drug."

Berman's lifelong struggle with food is chronicled in his new book, "Living Large: A Big Man's Ideas on Weight, Success, and Acceptance," set to hit bookstores Wednesday.

Berman said he wrote the book primarily because in all his years of reading weight loss books, he rarely found one about over-

weight men. Even more rare was trying to find a book written by an overweight man.

So he decided to provide that voice.

"I'm hoping that some people will come to understand more of what fat people go through," Berman said.

Berman said the book, which he co-authored with writer Laurence Shames, took seven years to complete.

"It really became kind of a vehicle to help me," Berman said of the book. "It kind of helped me stay on path with my weight management."

Berman, who has struggled with food since he was a child, has always been conscious of his weight. He has tried every diet imaginable, he said, from South Beach and Atkins to even undergoing two hospitalized starvation diets. He once hallucinated cheeseburgers.

But whenever he managed to get his weight under control, it would shoot back up again.

The 66-year-old tipped the scales at 317 pounds in January 1999. (He now weights 240 pounds, he said.)

"I really have the view, for really fat people like myself there's a significant psychological component as to why we are fat," Berman said. "There's some issues, some of which kind of get revealed in the book."

"Living Large" reads a lot like a biography. Berman talks about his childhood, meeting his wife and his career in politics.

He also includes first-hand views from his wife, Carol, on how his heavy stature has affected their marriage.

"One day, I said to her, 'Why don't you write a chapter called: 'Living with a fat man: A Spouse's Perspective' he said. 'I just came to realize that I had an enormous effect on her.'"

Only parts of his wife's chapter made it into the book (the entire section is available on Berman's Web site, www.mikelivinglarge.com). But Berman also manages to touch on some serious issues.

For example: Why did he gain weight at certain times? How has his weight affected his life and the lives of those around him?

Plus, he deals with the issues behind his significant weight, issues he has kept secret for quite some time.

"I feel like, OK. I've shared this stuff with the psychologist I had all these years, and I'm really comfortable with myself," Berman said. "I just became more and more comfortable."

The book's release comes at a time when the United States appears to be losing the war against obesity.

About 119 million adults in the United States—64.5 percent of the adult population—are either overweight or obese, according to the nonprofit group Trust for America's Health.

Obesity has been linked to a slew of serious health problems, from diabetes and heart disease to strokes and some cancers, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

That means the issue will be relevant—and political—for quite some time, Berman said.

"It's going to kind of be an issue of, 'Are we going to apply resources to beginning education campaigns to show young people that we are going to do something about it?'" he said. "I think it's increasingly going to be a political issue. But it is going to be a resource issue."

Berman said that he now has created a manageable situation for controlling his weight. He monitors his daily calorie intake in a meticulous journal, and he regularly gets on the scale.

"I'm never going to be a thin person," Berman said. "But, by golly, maybe I can keep (my weight) in a somewhat healthy range."

[From the Washington Post, Mar. 13, 2006]

THE MEASURE OF A MAN: LOBBYIST MICHAEL BERMAN COMES TO TERMS WITH SIZE AND SELF IN "LIVING LARGE"

(By Laura Sessions Stepp)

For more than six decades, Michael Berman has lived as a fat person. At 5 feet 9 inches, he has weighed as much as 332 pounds. He has been known to eat three racks of ribs at one sitting, or a 40-ounce steak, or a whole box of saltines. In 1986, after dropping a few pounds, he spent \$2,100 on three custom-made, pinstriped suits in gray, blue and brown. By the time the suits were ready, 10 weeks later, they no longer fit. Eleven years after that he gave them away, having never been able to wear them.

A highly successful political campaigner and Washington lobbyist, Berman, 66, doesn't deny the dangers of fatness or the urgency of encouraging people to exercise and eat healthier. He acknowledges that with 60 percent of the U.S. population overweight or obese, and the rate of obesity increasing particularly dramatically in children, being fat has serious consequences for the health of individuals and the economy. He'd like to see government and private resources used for a public education campaign similar to that for smoking and seat-belt use.

But forget the notion that fat people can become slim, he says in a part memoir, part self-help book scheduled for release this week. They can—and should—manage their weight. They can—and should—find an exercise program they can stick with. But fat adults will always be fat. They are in the grips of a disease over which, in the end, they do not have complete control.

This is not likely to be a popular message among those who manage their daily lives with BlackBerrys, filter out porn on their kids' computers, block negative information coming from government sources. Is he trying to say that the fatties who sprawl over airplane seats could not shrink to a reasonable size if they just stopped wolfing down those Big Macs?

Yes, that's what he's saying. "The idea that you can slim down by willpower is a bunch of horse manure," he said. If "nonfat" Americans could be convinced of this, perhaps they'd start relating better to fat Americans. And if fat Americans understood why they're fat and accepted that they will always have to shop at Rochester Big and Tall or Lane Bryant, they could begin "Living Large," as Berman called his book.

A Minnesota native, Berman has lived large for a long time among Washington's elite. He served as counsel and deputy chief of staff to former vice president Walter Mondale, acted as scheduler for six Democratic conventions and, in 1989, formed a bipartisan lobbying firm that today counts General Motors and British Petroleum among its clients. During the Clinton years, he was on a "special access list" that gave him virtually unrestricted entree to the White House. He and Carol, his wife of 40 years, live in the gracious Colonnade condominiums in Northwest Washington and entertain powerful friends they've accumulated over the years.

Being a BMOC means you're treated differently than the masses. The Palm restaurant, noted for its creamed vegetables, serves Berman steamed spinach and broccoli. The chef at I Ricchi created a dish of roasted vegetables for him. The maitre d' at Georgetown's Four Seasons restaurant knows that for breakfast meetings he prefers the table one row from the windows near the center of the dining room; the servers never place a basket of toast on his table.

But politics is dangerous for anyone hoping to maintain a reasonable weight, Berman says over breakfast at the Four Seasons.

"The cocktail parties are not difficult," he says, his shirt sleeves pushed up to reveal a large yellow Corum wristwatch. He attacks a dish of large blueberries, then an egg-white omelet and four wide slices of turkey bacon. "I can get a glass of Diet Coke, mingle, and only occasionally grab an hors d'oeuvre as it goes by. What is hard are the large sitdown dinners where you can't control the menu. Or where you're with 3,000 other people, you order a vegetarian meal, it takes forever to arrive and meanwhile there's a basket in front of you full of bread."

He is comfortable with being different, now. But he has suffered through countless eight swings, 20 diet programs, a kidney infection and knee surgery. And it has taken him eight years of counseling, the careful attention of a personal trainer/nutritionist and the sustained support of his wife to get to that place.

Berman first realized he was not just husky, but really fat, when he was 13, weighed about 170 pounds and was standing in the shower of the boys' locker room one day after gym class in his home town of Duluth, Minn.

"I hated gym," he recalls in "Living Large: A Big Man's Ideas on Weight, Success and Acceptance," written with Laurence Shames. "I couldn't climb ropes, couldn't do pushups. . . . I dreaded being naked in the shower with the other boys. . . . I hid as much as possible, showered as quickly as I could, and pulled a shirt on even before my skin was fully dry."

On the morning in question, as he stood in the open showers, a boy next to him grabbed his chest, saying he wanted to know what it felt like to touch a girl's breast. That was just one of thousands of indignities he would encounter or bring upon himself.

In his sophomore year at the University of Minnesota at Duluth, his fraternity brothers determined that he should lose his virginity at a party in a cabin by a lake and enlisted the help of an attractive woman a couple of years older than he. She took his hand and led him into a bedroom. She lay down and motioned for him to join her. As he did, he realized she had passed out, having drunk herself silly before having sex with a 250-pound 19-year-old.

One afternoon in law school, reading in a wooden armchair, he started to get up only to realize that he was stuck in the chair.

"My body had essentially flowed out to fill the space between the arms and seat," he writes. "My hips were captured; my bottom stayed glued to the chair and the whole thing lifted up with me as I tried to stand. . . . I felt all eyes on me, understood that people didn't want to look but, as at a train wreck, couldn't turn away."

He decided to play the clown. "Still crouched over, taking small, constricted steps, I carried [the chair] across the room, somewhat like a turtle with its shell, and sat down once again." Today he winces at all the times he played the jolly fat man: leading college cheerleaders onto the football field by pedaling a miniature girl's bike; assuming the role of Santa Claus at White House Christmas parties, the Easter Bunny at the vice president's residence. Perhaps his experience in acting the fool is why he was able to ignore the advice of a friend who tried to steer him away from writing a book about his fatness, saying it would be "undignified."

Undignified? His pal, like so many thinner people, didn't know from undignified.

Berman realized pretty quickly as a teen that in order to be taken seriously and make something of his life, he would have to develop talents other than vaudeville. In the family rec room, his parents taught him ballroom dancing—the first thing, he writes, that his rotund body was good at. He took up

musical theater in high school and continued it in college. He managed his first political campaign in junior high for a girl running for president of the student council. She lost, but the campaign taught him he could succeed in politics behind the scenes. He didn't need to be cute, just hardworking, shrewd and resourceful.

He would have preferred to be a football star. "Over time, though—and largely without my noticing from day to day—I realized that something sort of wonderful had been happening," he writes. "My various 'compensations' had been adding up to a pretty good approximation of the sort of life I feared I'd never have. I was busy; I had friends; I was appreciated and respected for things I was good at."

One of the things he was, and is, good at, says wife Carol, is listening to and valuing women.

In the book, Berman calls Carol "the strongest and most stable component" of his life. But their first date almost didn't happen. It was Aug. 1, 1964, and Berman, 26, had been hired to lead a voter registration drive in a Duluth suburb for President Lyndon Johnson's reelection campaign. After swearing off blind dates at least half a dozen times, he arrived at the door of the apartment for yet one more try, this time with Carol Podhoretz, a 24-year-old speech pathologist.

She greeted him in a nice dress, stockings and high heels. Taking one look at his 288-pound frame, she announced that she had a headache and wouldn't be able to go out. Here we go again, he thought. But then she invited him in for a drink.

"He was big, and I reacted like a lot of young women would have reacted," Carol Berman recalls in a phone conversation. "He asked me why I worked as a speech pathologist and I really liked the reaction I got when I said I liked to help people. He said, 'I love that.'"

About an hour into their conversation, Carol announced that her headache had disappeared and she'd like to go out as planned. They dined at his favorite restaurant, then headed to a club to dance. That was all it took. Carol, a former Arthur Murray instructor, was as graceful on her feet as he was. "Somewhere between the cha-cha and the Lindy," he writes, "we began to have the feeling that it would be nice to see more of each other."

They went out on 29 of the next 30 nights. Carol said she found him "adorable," and a man with "great lips." In early December, while they were dancing together and a little bit tipsy, she whispered, "You know, we should just get married."

"Fine," he said.

Life together since has been good, although Carol had to make a couple of what she calls "accommodations." The hardest for her was not being able to have children. Six years after they married, she began trying to conceive. For several years after that, she endured various painful interventions, none of which worked. A fertility specialist told Michael and her that his sperm count might be a factor; fat men tend to have a lower number. For Michael, not having children wasn't that big a deal. For Carol, who eventually had a hysterectomy because of fibroid tumors, it was. "It is still what I consider a loss," she said.

Michael gradually realized during these years how hard politics was on a man trying to shed pounds. He had developed sharp political skills that were in demand at the highest levels of political and corporate Washington: making someone feel as if he or she were the only person in the room, paying attention to detail, distilling and delivering big ideas in a few seconds. What he couldn't

do was turn down the doughnuts, chips, big steaks and potatoes that are the staple of political life. By the time his first Democratic convention was over, the famous Chicago convention in 1968, his weight exceeded 300 pounds for the first time.

Convention years were tough on the marriage. Michael and Carol first realized this in 1989, on their 25th wedding anniversary. On a visit to the beach, Michael brought Carol a handful of shells, put them on a board and suggested she use them to show how happy she was in their marriage for each of their 25 years. The year 1965 got a big shell; 1968 a little shell; 1984 a shard.

That was the year Walter Mondale lost the election to Ronald Reagan, and Berman weighed 330 pounds. He was wearing a size 58 suite, consuming up to five pounds of red meat a week along with up to 18 eggs. He couldn't walk a city block without panting. He developed sleep apnea, where his body would forget to breathe. Carol told him he looked green. Scared for his health for the first time in his life, he enrolled in a Pritiken Longevity Center in Pennsylvania. He lost 112 pounds—and that's when he ordered the custom suits.

Berman never again weighed as much as he did in 1984. In 1989, he joined Republican Ken Duberstein—who had served as Reagan's chief of staff—in forming the Duberstein Group. He started psychotherapy in 1990 and, several years after, employed a private nutritionist and trainer.

Still, his weight seesawed. By 1997—a year after he was diagnosed with a kidney problem—he was up to 309 pounds.

In 1998, on the advice of a friend, he started jotting down thoughts and memories about being fat with the idea of writing a book someday. The exercise became, not surprisingly, an obsession. He read scientific reports and researched cultures of the past in which fatness was considered a symbol of wisdom, serenity and wealth. One day he walked into a pharmacy and bought 22 different diet aids, one of everything on the shelf, to investigate how effective they are. His conclusion: They aren't.

He read that for some people, fatness is genetic. But he had researched his family tree; that wasn't true for him. So he began to develop his own theory on why people are fat.

The easy answer, of course, is that they take in more calories than they burn. But then it gets more complicated, he writes. Each person's metabolism is different. He, his sister and his parents all ate a lot of his mother's delicious briskets and lamb chops and none of them exercised much. But he was the only one who got fat.

Emotions, buried for many years, play a role, too. From the age of 4, he sneaked cookies, crackers and anything else he could into his bedroom.

"I could not control my appetite because something was driving me," he writes, "something that was beyond the reach of willpower, outside the realm of reason."

He and his psychologist came to believe that his compulsion started partly as a reaction to his mother. Early in his life, she showed her affection by cooking rich meals and he showed his affection by eating lots of it. As he got older and heftier in early adolescence, she started withholding food and he ate as a way of asserting his emerging will.

Later in life, dropping out of weight-loss programs even though he was losing weight, he had to confront another factor: He was fat-dependent.

Fat was something he could hide behind, an excuse for not doing things that he was afraid of doing. For example, in high school, he felt anxious around girls. By making himself fat and unattractive, he could approach them as potential friends, not girlfriends.

Eventually he had to admit that he was an addict. But unlike alcoholics or drug users, he couldn't go cold turkey.

"The most difficult thing about a food addiction is that you can't give up food," he said at breakfast.

He pulled out a tiny spiral notebook in which he records everything he eats each day and the total calorie count, as well as how much he exercises.

"March 1—1,610 calories. March 2—2,295. March 3—2,500. March 4—4,465."

What happened on March 4? He and Carol attended a dinner party at pollster Peter Hart's. He couldn't resist the chocolate cake. "I ate probably eight ounces of chocolate," he admitted. "But I don't beat myself up anymore. I knew I'd be heavier the next morning so the next couple of days I'd be careful."

A couple of years ago, he wouldn't have been so sanguine. But if there was one thing he had learned in writing his book, it was this: "Losing weight is only one aspect of dealing with the reality of being a fat person—and not necessarily even the most important one. Managing fatness means accepting ourselves as who we are. . . . in short, learning to live a full and satisfying life at whatever weight and size we happen to be."

Two days after Hart's party, he was back down to 1,830 calories.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

• Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize the 125th anniversary of the founding of Dakota State University. Over the course of its history, DSU has changed names and modified its mission, but throughout it all, it has continuously produced extraordinary graduates. In the modern, high-tech, and competitive environment in which we live, DSU students are equipped with the skills that are essential for success.

Originally known as Dakota Normal School, DSU was founded in the community of Madison, which was then part of Dakota Territory. At various times, DSU has been called Eastern State Teacher's College, General Beadle State College, and Dakota State College. In 1989 the school's name changed once again to Dakota State University.

Since its inception, DSU has been renowned for giving students the tools they need to become exceptional teachers. More recently, an emphasis on computer and information systems has turned DSU into one of the most technologically-savvy universities in the Nation. DSU regularly appears near the top of Yahoo magazine's list of 100 most wired campuses.

With enrollment now at 2,300, DSU continues to attract more students by utilizing distance learning and Internet classes. It has also been a leader in integrating traditional academic disciplines with cutting-edge technology. For its innovation and adaptability, DSU was selected as one of the 10 finalists for the 1987 G. Theodore Mitau

Award, a distinction awarded by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. In addition to offering three master's degree programs, DSU offers a doctorate program for science in information systems, which will be available starting in the fall of 2007.

In education, technology, and research, DSU is at the forefront of academic and cultural achievement. For 125 years, the university has helped students realize their potential by offering them a quality education and a positive social environment. DSU graduates are well-equipped to succeed in a competitive world, delivering countless benefits to organizations and communities close to home and around the globe. Through commitment to change and transformation, DSU continues to live up to its motto: "Get on the edge and stay there!"

HONORING ELEANOR SLATER

• Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Eleanor Slater, an extraordinary woman and leader who did so much for the State of Rhode Island and the country. Her passing is a great loss to her family and to Rhode Islanders. Not only did I have the privilege of knowing her throughout my political life, she was an ally, a mentor, an exemplar, and trustworthy friend.

Born in 1908, Eleanor entered the political arena by winning election to the Rhode Island General Assembly at the spry age of 50. During the career that followed, she was widely known for fighting for the individuals and causes that are so often marginalized by our society. One of her greatest contributions, and there were many in her political career, was passage in the Rhode Island General Assembly of the Nation's very first fair housing legislation. The Slater Act of 1968 made it illegal to discriminate when selling or renting real estate property. This sorely needed law, which she had long championed to help bring greater equality to housing in Rhode Island, set a precedent for the entire country.

Her determination remained a key characteristic throughout her political career. As a delegate to the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Eleanor refused to succumb to the pressures of her peers to support President Johnson's strategy for the Vietnam War. She held steadfastly to her own opposing point of view and never compromised her values or beliefs.

Eleanor joined the political fray at a time when women were largely left out of the inner political processes, and she is credited with getting women involved in Democratic politics in Rhode Island. As a standout member of a predominately male legislature, she actively encouraged other women to run for political office and became the vice chairwoman of the Democratic State Committee in 1958.

Upon leaving the Rhode Island State Senate, she served as the first chief of