

(PRE-FILED)

By: **Senator Britt**
Requested: October 25, 2004
Introduced and read first time: January 12, 2005
Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A Senate Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Obesity Awareness**

3 FOR the purpose of recognizing obesity as an increasing health concern and cause of
4 rising medical costs in Maryland; declaring the month of November as Obesity
5 Awareness Month; and generally relating to obesity awareness.

6 WHEREAS, Maryland's leaders have a responsibility to encourage and promote
7 healthy lifestyles for the residents of the State, including communicating information
8 about healthy diet and the importance of physical activity; and

9 WHEREAS, Obesity is a serious medical condition; and

10 WHEREAS, The number of overweight and obese adults increased 62% between
11 1990 and 2002; and

12 WHEREAS, Presently 58% of adults in Maryland are overweight or obese, and
13 the frequency of these conditions increases with age; and

14 WHEREAS, In 2002, approximately 15.3% of children between the ages of 6 and
15 11 years old and 15.5% of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 19 years old were
16 overweight or at risk of being overweight; and

17 WHEREAS, Overweight and obese adults are at increased risk for
18 cardiovascular disease, diabetes, stroke, hypertension, gall bladder disease,
19 osteoarthritis, and some cancers; and

20 WHEREAS, Overweight children are at increased risk for hypertension,
21 asthma, sleep apnea, and diabetes as well as poor psychosocial functioning and
22 decreased well-being; and

23 WHEREAS, Obesity ranks second only to smoking as a preventable cause of
24 death; and

25 WHEREAS, A study by the Centers for Disease Control estimates that medical
26 expenditures attributable to obesity in the United States reached \$75 billion in 2003
27 and that taxpayers financed approximately half of these costs through Medicare and
28 Medicaid; and

1 WHEREAS, In Maryland, over 8%, or \$368 million, of medical expenditures are
2 attributable to obesity in the Medicare population and over 13%, or \$391 million, of
3 medical expenditures in Maryland are attributable to obesity in the Medicaid
4 population; and

5 WHEREAS, It is in the best interests of the residents of the State to continue to
6 implement effective existing methods of treatment and prevention of adult and
7 childhood obesity and to reduce the potential for other serious medical conditions
8 caused or exacerbated by obesity; and

9 WHEREAS, Education, prevention, and proper treatment of obesity can reduce
10 health care costs and improve the quality of life for a significant number of adults and
11 children in Maryland; now, therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the
13 General Assembly acknowledges obesity as a growing epidemic, and urges
14 communities, businesses, and schools throughout the State to develop awareness
15 campaigns and voluntary programs appropriate to their settings that focus on the
16 causes of and prevention of obesity, the symptoms and long-term consequences
17 associated with obesity, and the healthy alternatives for food choices and appropriate
18 programs of physical fitness that lead to control of weight and improved lifestyle; and
19 be it further

20 RESOLVED, That the General Assembly further encourages the expansion of
21 physical education in schools, the creation of obesity prevention programs for the
22 whole family, and the inclusion of obesity prevention in medical school curricula; and
23 be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the month of November is declared Obesity Awareness Month
25 in Maryland; and be it further

26 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
27 Legislative Services to the Honorable Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor of Maryland;
28 the Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; and
29 the Honorable Michael E. Busch, Speaker of the House of Delegates.