

# SENATE BILL 437

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CF 8lr2264

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By: **Senators Jones, Forehand, Kramer, Madaleno, Pugh, Raskin, and Rosapepe**

Introduced and read first time: January 31, 2008

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **State Designations – Walking as the State Exercise**

3 FOR the purpose of designating walking as the State exercise.

4 BY adding to

5 Article – State Government

6 Section 13–320

7 Annotated Code of Maryland

8 (2004 Replacement Volume and 2007 Supplement)

9 Preamble

10 WHEREAS, Heart disease is the number one cause of death each year in  
11 Maryland, and thousands of Maryland citizens suffer from disease and other health  
12 problems as a result of a lack of physical activity; and

13 WHEREAS, Mortality rates from coronary artery disease in Maryland rank in  
14 the top one–third in the nation with more than 12,000 people dying annually; and

15 WHEREAS, Physical inactivity and unhealthy eating are leading risk factors  
16 that contribute to at least 400,000 preventable deaths each year in the United States;  
17 and

18 WHEREAS, In 2004, approximately 23% of Americans and 31% of Marylanders  
19 engaged in no leisure time physical activity; and

20 WHEREAS, In 2004, the obesity rate in Maryland was greater than 23%; and

21 WHEREAS, Maryland ranks in the top 50% of the heaviest states in the nation,  
22 with an adult obesity rate of 23.4%; and

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 WHEREAS, In the United States, the number of adults and children who are  
2 overweight has risen sharply during the past 25 years, and the percentage of adults  
3 and children who made trips on foot dropped during that same period; and

4 WHEREAS, Health care costs related to cardiovascular disease in Maryland are  
5 \$2.25 billion yearly, and the annual cost of heaviness and obesity in the United States  
6 is \$122.9 billion with \$64.1 billion in direct costs and \$58.8 billion in indirect costs;  
7 and

8 WHEREAS, If all inactive Americans were to participate in physical activity, an  
9 estimated \$76.6 billion in direct health costs would be saved; and

10 WHEREAS, One in five children are overweight or at risk of being overweight,  
11 and encouraging children to walk more can establish more physically active and  
12 healthy lifestyles; and

13 WHEREAS, Suicide is the third leading cause of death among children and  
14 young people and the eighth leading cause of death overall, and physical activity  
15 reduces feeling of depression and anxiety; and

16 WHEREAS, The U.S. Surgeon General recommends that all Americans walk at  
17 least 30 minutes per day, 5 days a week; and

18 WHEREAS, Walking is one of the best forms of exercise because it helps reduce  
19 cholesterol, improve cardiovascular fitness, improve blood pressure, reduce the risk of  
20 heart attack, and prevent colon cancer, breast cancer, osteoporosis, and diabetes; and

21 WHEREAS, More than 300,000 Maryland residents have diabetes, and an  
22 estimated one-third of the population remains undiagnosed, and walking 30 minutes  
23 a day cuts the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes by 58%; and

24 WHEREAS, Walking is ideally suited for rehabilitation after illness, surgery, or  
25 injury by strengthening the heart, lungs, and circulatory system; and

26 WHEREAS, The risk of injury while walking is less than with other forms of  
27 physical activity, and injuries incurred while walking are less severe than with many  
28 other exercises; and

29 WHEREAS, Walking is a fun activity that friends and family can do together;  
30 and

31 WHEREAS, Walking promotes informal interactions between people and  
32 strengthens community, and many neighborhoods lack any social contact between  
33 neighbors; and

1           WHEREAS, Walking is a natural activity that does not require any specialized  
2 equipment or training and is an inexpensive physical activity that most Maryland  
3 citizens can do easily, at any time during the day; and

4           WHEREAS, Walking is as close to a universal physical activity as there is and  
5 can be easily integrated into the daily routine of most Marylanders; and

6           WHEREAS, Most people in Maryland already walk every day and a person can  
7 engage in other activities while walking, such as meeting and greeting neighbors,  
8 talking with friends and family, observing nature or the community, and running  
9 errands or shopping; and

10           WHEREAS, Environments that encourage walking help to promote tourism and  
11 commerce; and

12           WHEREAS, Increased walking is an important facet of livable and sustainable  
13 communities; and

14           WHEREAS, Walking is an environmentally friendly method of transportation,  
15 which helps to reduce reliance on automobiles while cutting traffic congestion and air  
16 pollution; and

17           WHEREAS, Walking as a symbol for Maryland will benefit individual citizens  
18 and Maryland as a whole; now, therefore,

19           SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
20 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

21                                   **Article – State Government**

22           **13-320.**

23                                   **WALKING IS THE STATE EXERCISE.**

24           SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
25 October 1, 2008.