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Senate Resolution Affirms Importance of Physical Activity in Combating Obesity Epidemic and Lowering U.S. Health Care Spending

Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund Applauds Sens. Casey and Burr

(Washington D.C.) On the heels of the passage of a landmark Senate resolution “affirming the importance of exercise and physical activity as a way of combating obesity, reducing chronic disease and lowering health care costs,” the Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund commended the resolution’s bipartisan authors, Senator Robert Casey (D-PA) and Senator Richard Burr (R-NC). The resolution, expressing the sense of the Senate, “encourages the development of incentives, including responsible economic incentives, to promote exercise and a more physically active and healthy United States.”

“This resolution sends a powerful message —to both Congress and the American people— that to reverse the obesity epidemic and curb skyrocketing long-term health care costs, physical activity must be a priority for policymakers,” said Penny Lee, Executive Director of the Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund. “This resolution clearly defines the correlation between inactivity and the strain it poses to our health care system, its monumental costs to taxpayers and our mortality —all costs our that children will pay dearly, absent steps to reverse this epidemic.”

The resolution, which notes that “increased physical activity can play a direct role in reducing the incidence of chronic diseases” also highlights that average per capita health spending from 1997 through 2005 for the 15 costliest conditions associated with obesity increased by 55 percent. Approximately half of all direct medical costs associated with obesity-related illness —and inactivity— are paid for by taxpayers through federally funded programs, such as Medicaid and Medicare, the resolution states.

In spite of the Senate’s recognition of this challenge, there remain real and imminent threats to important national physical activity programs, which may be reduced as part of federal budget cutbacks now being considered.

“We hope that the Senate’s unanimous call to action will resonate with policymakers as they consider budget decisions and other important legislation this year, such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and the critical role physical activity plays in improving our nation’s economic and physical health,” added Lee.

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About the Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund

The Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund is dedicated to federal policy changes that can reverse one of America's costliest diseases. The Campaign convenes leaders from industry, academia, public health and associations to speak with one voice for measures to reverse the obesity epidemic and promote healthy weight in children and adults.