



April 13, 2007

The Honorable John Cornyn  
United States Senate  
517 Hart SOB  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cornyn:

On behalf of Trust for America's Health, a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to saving lives by protecting the health of every community and working to make disease prevention a national priority, I would like to thank you for introducing the Workforce Health Improvement Program Act of 2007 (S. 1038), which addresses a critical issue -- the nation's obesity epidemic.

Our most recent report on obesity, *F as in Fat: How Obesity Policies are Failing in America 2006*, identified "providing tax or other incentives to businesses that subsidize gym memberships, provide fitness facilities at worksites, or take other measures to encourage exercise" as a key component in fighting the nation's growing obesity rate. Indeed, in our survey of state Chronic Disease Directors (CDDs), which was designed to determine which obesity prevention strategies experts believe are most effective, workplace approaches were identified as the top priority for adult obesity mitigation strategies. We are pleased that your legislation addresses this recommendation by allowing employers to deduct the cost of both on and off-site fitness centers on a pre-tax basis and by specifying that employer contributions to the cost of health club fees would not be taxable income for employees.

The federal government and businesses can play an important role in helping to reverse the obesity epidemic. Your bill would promote physical fitness and is a very important step in the right direction.

Again, I want to commend your leadership and thank you for introducing this very important public health bill. TFAH looks forward to working with you on this and other important public health initiatives in the future. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Richard Hamburg, our Director of Government Relations, at (202) 223-9876 or Jeremy Sharp at (202) 223-9870 x20.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey Levi", is written over a faint, larger version of the signature.

Jeffrey Levi, PhD  
Executive Director