



April 10, 2007

The Honorable Zach Wamp
United States House of Representatives
1436 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Wamp:

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 your leadership in protecting our nation's health. By introducing **H.R. 1224**, you address one of the most critical issues confronting the public's health in the United States and around the world -- the obesity epidemic.

In our most recent report on obesity, *F as in Fat: How Obesity Policies are Failing in America 2006*, we found that obesity rates continued to rise last year in 31 states, and remained dangerously high in 18 other states and the District of Columbia. In the U.S., obesity rates have tripled in children and adolescents over the last 20 years. The health consequences of overweight and obesity, which include increased rates of chronic diseases like Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke, are too serious to ignore. The economic consequences are also staggering, with the Department of Health and Human Services estimating that the direct and indirect costs of obesity are over \$117 billion.

Unfortunately, despite the alarming health and economic effects of obesity, a range of research shows a decline in physical activity as children enter adolescence. One of the "fat factors" that our report identified as a contributor to growing obesity rates among children is the reduction in the amount of physical education, recess and recreation time in schools. Our report also noted that schools lack quality measures for physical education classes.

While personal behavior is at the center of maintaining healthy levels of diet and exercise, the federal government, states, communities and schools also play a crucial role in fighting the obesity epidemic by making programs and public health interventions available for individuals and families. In fact, studies have shown that programs aimed at improving student participation in physical activity generally have positive results. H.R. 1224 highlights the important contribution that schools can make to combating obesity. We believe that making physical education part of No Child Left Behind's core curriculum, as outlined in your bill, is a very positive and necessary step.

Congressman Zach Wamp

April 10, 2007

Page 2

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,

Jeffrey Levi, PhD
Executive Director