

# Physical Education & Childhood Obesity



- **Community Pediatrics**
- **Legislative Advocacy Project**
  - *John Babineau, MD*
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# Background

- A 2003 study by the NYC Department of Education and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene confirmed that **NYC is following a national trend**
- Nearly half of all of our public elementary school students are overweight or obese
- One in five kindergarten students enters our school system already clinically obese.



# Why this is critical

- Regular physical activity, combined with healthy eating, is among the best strategies for preventing and combating childhood obesity, diabetes, and other obesity-related illness.



# Why this is critical

- A 2001 study from the California Department of Education identified a direct correlation between students' performance on literacy and math tests, and their performance on measures of physical fitness.

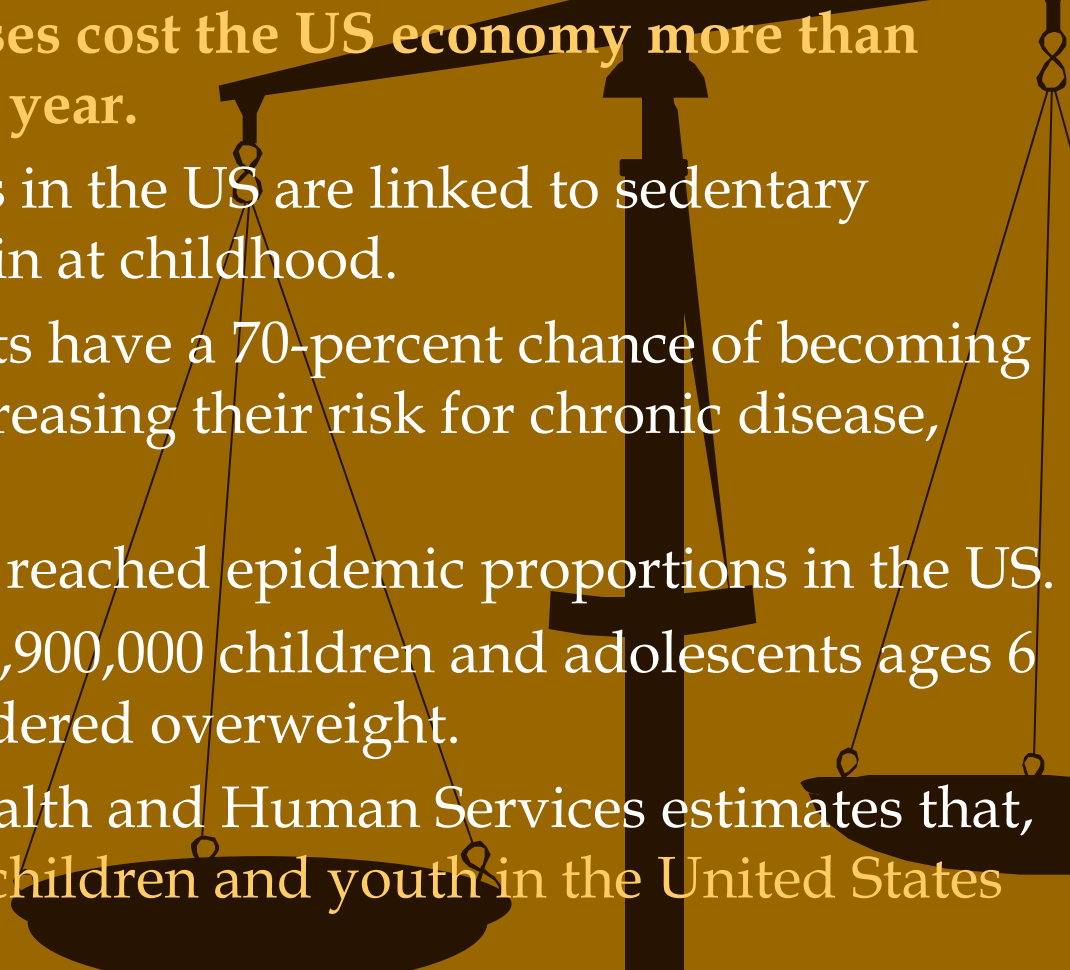


NYC Department of Education

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

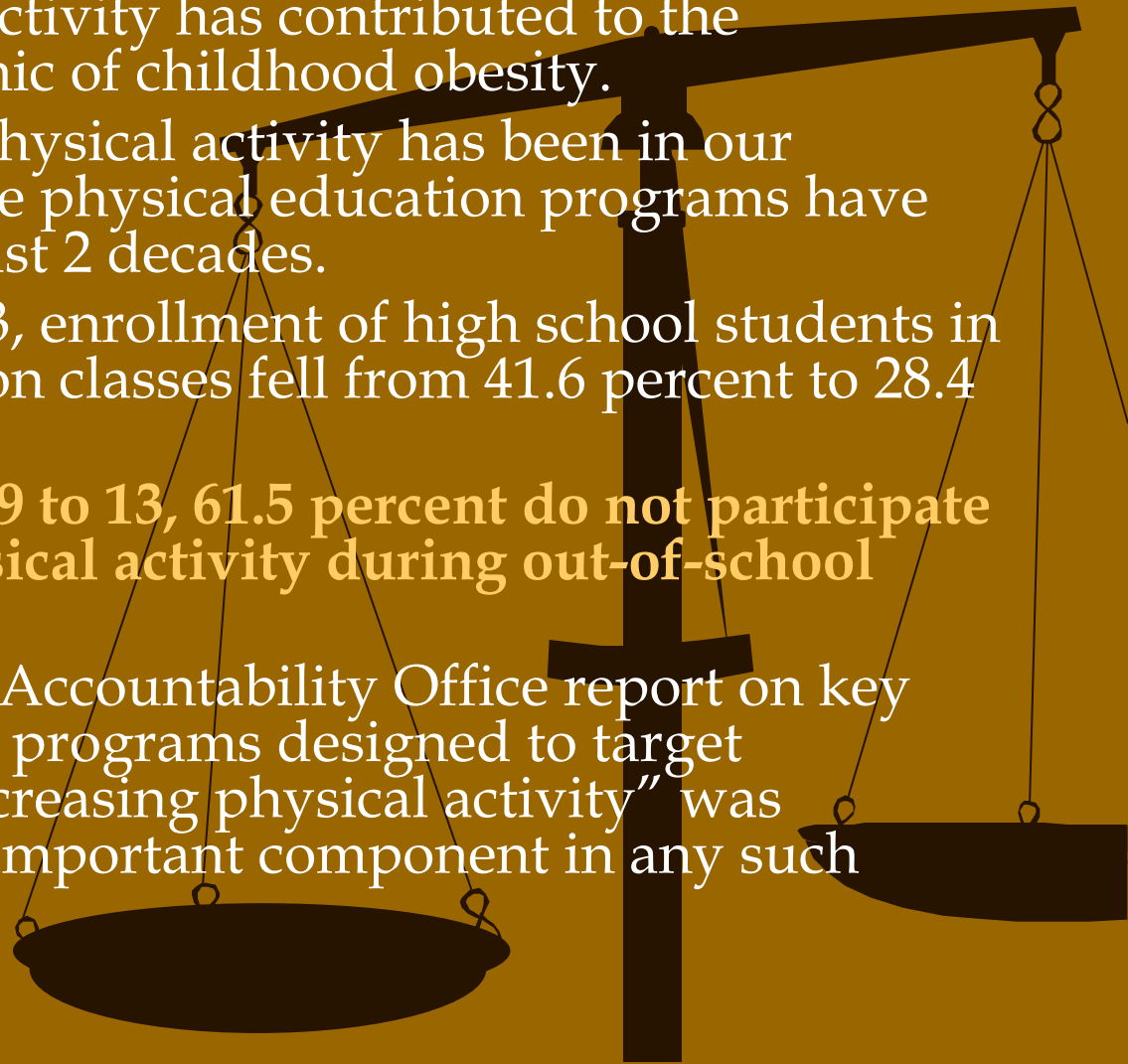
# The scope of the problem

*Congress makes the following findings:*

- **Obesity-related diseases cost the US economy more than \$100,000,000,000 every year.**
  - 23 percent of all deaths in the US are linked to sedentary lifestyles that now begin at childhood.
  - Overweight adolescents have a 70-percent chance of becoming overweight adults, increasing their risk for chronic disease, disability, and death.
  - Childhood obesity has reached epidemic proportions in the US.
  - In 2004, an estimated 9,900,000 children and adolescents ages 6 through 19 were considered overweight.
  - The Department of Health and Human Services estimates that, by 2010, 20 percent of children and youth in the United States will be obese.
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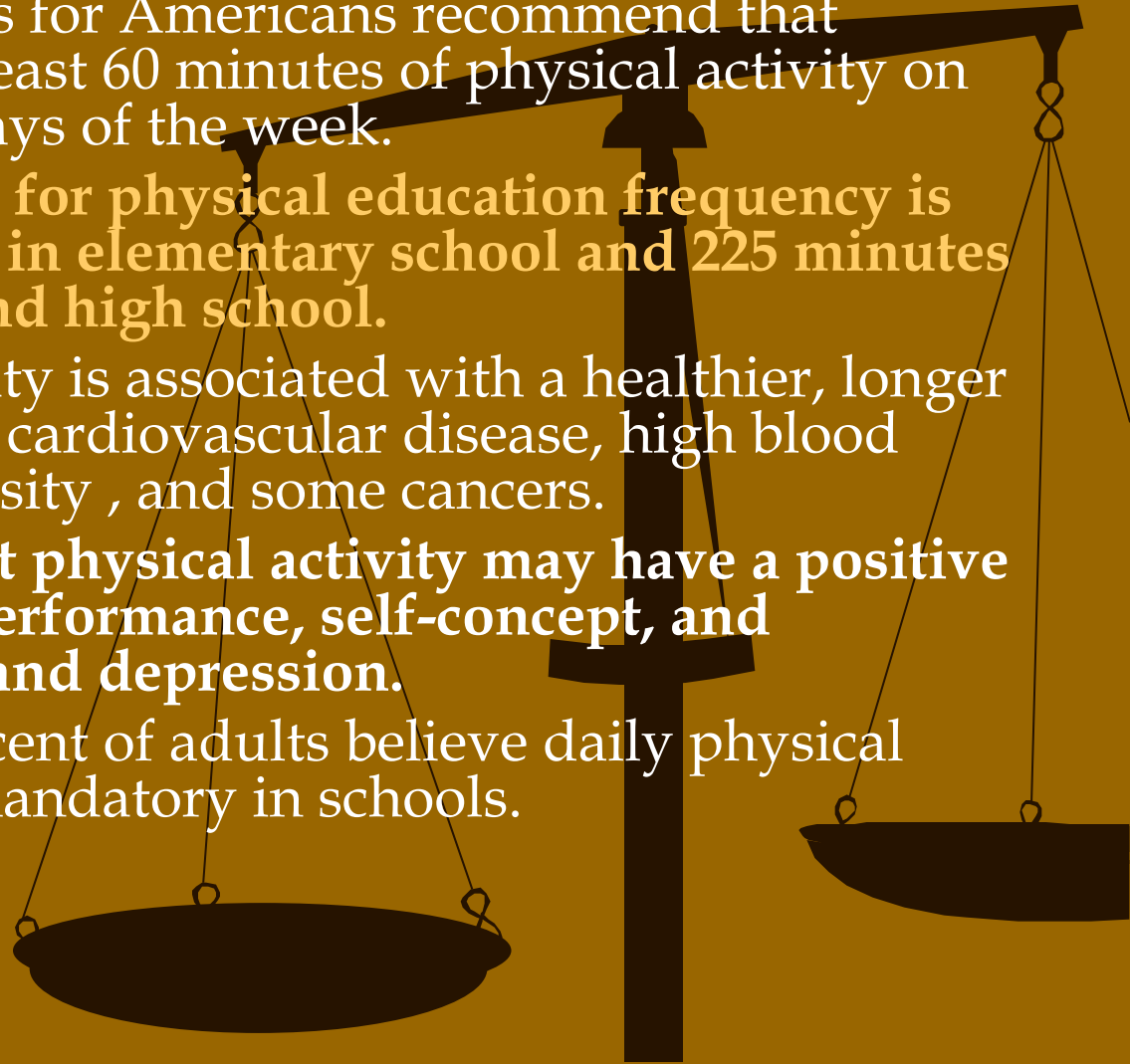
# The scope of the problem

- A decline in physical activity has contributed to the unprecedented epidemic of childhood obesity.
- Part of the decline in physical activity has been in our Nation's schools, where physical education programs have been cut back in the past 2 decades.
- Between 1991 and 2003, enrollment of high school students in daily physical education classes fell from 41.6 percent to 28.4 percent.
- **Among children ages 9 to 13, 61.5 percent do not participate in any organized physical activity during out-of-school hours.**
- In a 2005 Government Accountability Office report on key strategies to include in programs designed to target childhood obesity, “increasing physical activity” was identified as the most important component in any such program.

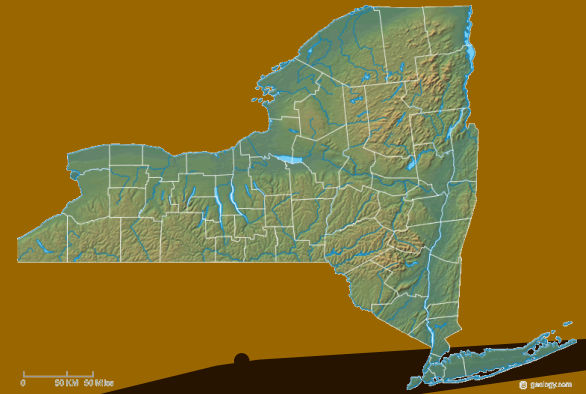


# The scope of the problem

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that children engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week.
- **The national standard for physical education frequency is 150 minutes per week in elementary school and 225 minutes per week in middle and high school.**
- Regular physical activity is associated with a healthier, longer life and a lower risk of cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, and some cancers.
- **Evidence suggests that physical activity may have a positive impact on academic performance, self-concept, and symptoms of anxiety and depression.**
- Approximately 81 percent of adults believe daily physical education should be mandatory in schools.



# NY State Mandate



- **Grades K-3** should participate in physical education on a daily basis
- **Grades 4-6** shall participate in physical education for at least 120 minutes per calendar week
- **Grades 7-12** need at least 3 periods of physical education per calendar week (many loopholes here, however)



# What about New York City?

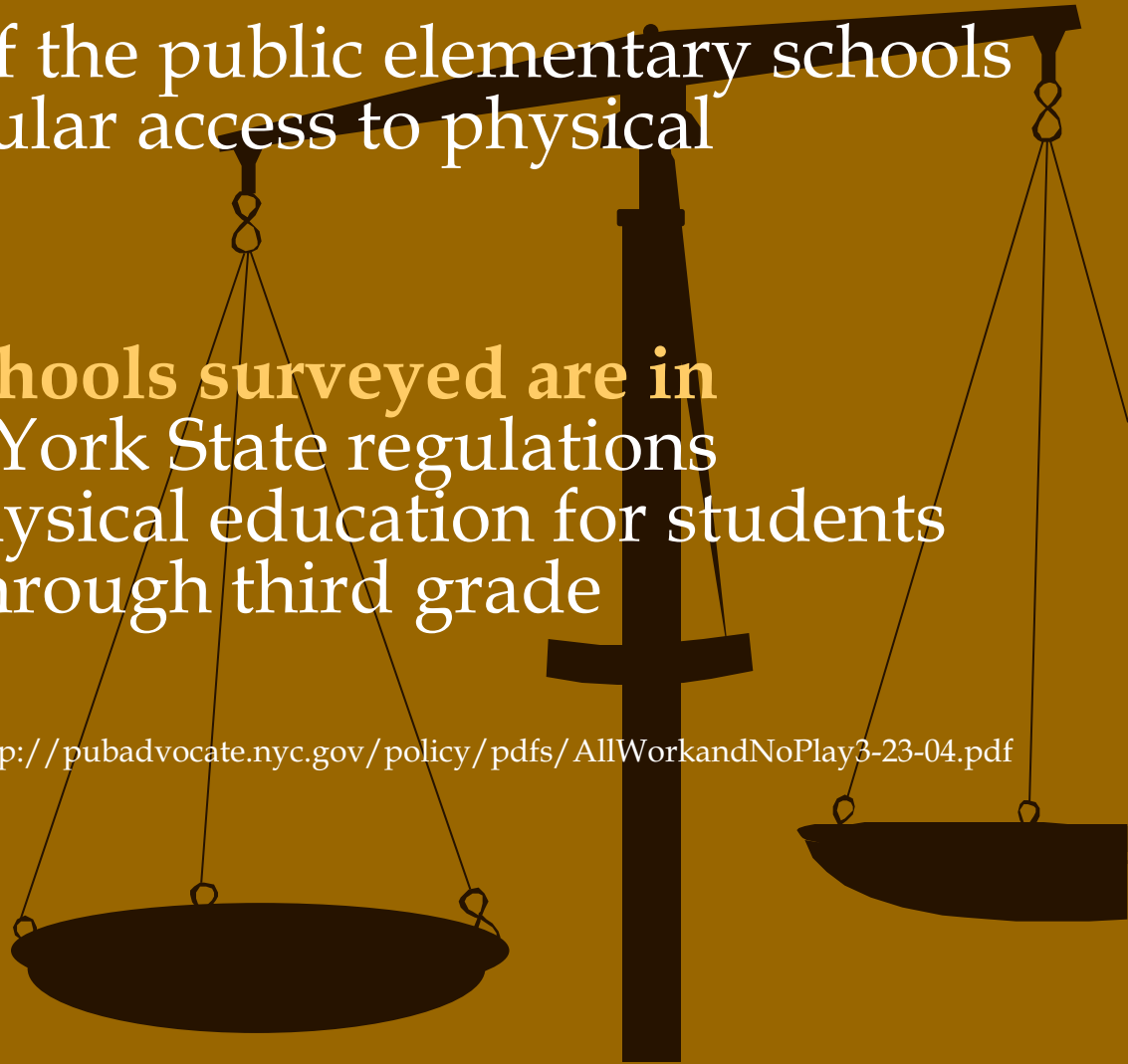
- 2004 – Report released by Public Advocate
- Survey of 100 NYC public schools across 5 boroughs to test compliance with state mandate for physical education



# NYC Public Advocate Survey: *Findings*

- **Twenty percent** of the public elementary schools surveyed lack regular access to physical education classes
- **All elementary schools surveyed are in violation** of New York State regulations requiring daily physical education for students in Kindergarten through third grade

<http://pubadvocate.nyc.gov/policy/pdfs/AllWorkandNoPlay3-23-04.pdf>

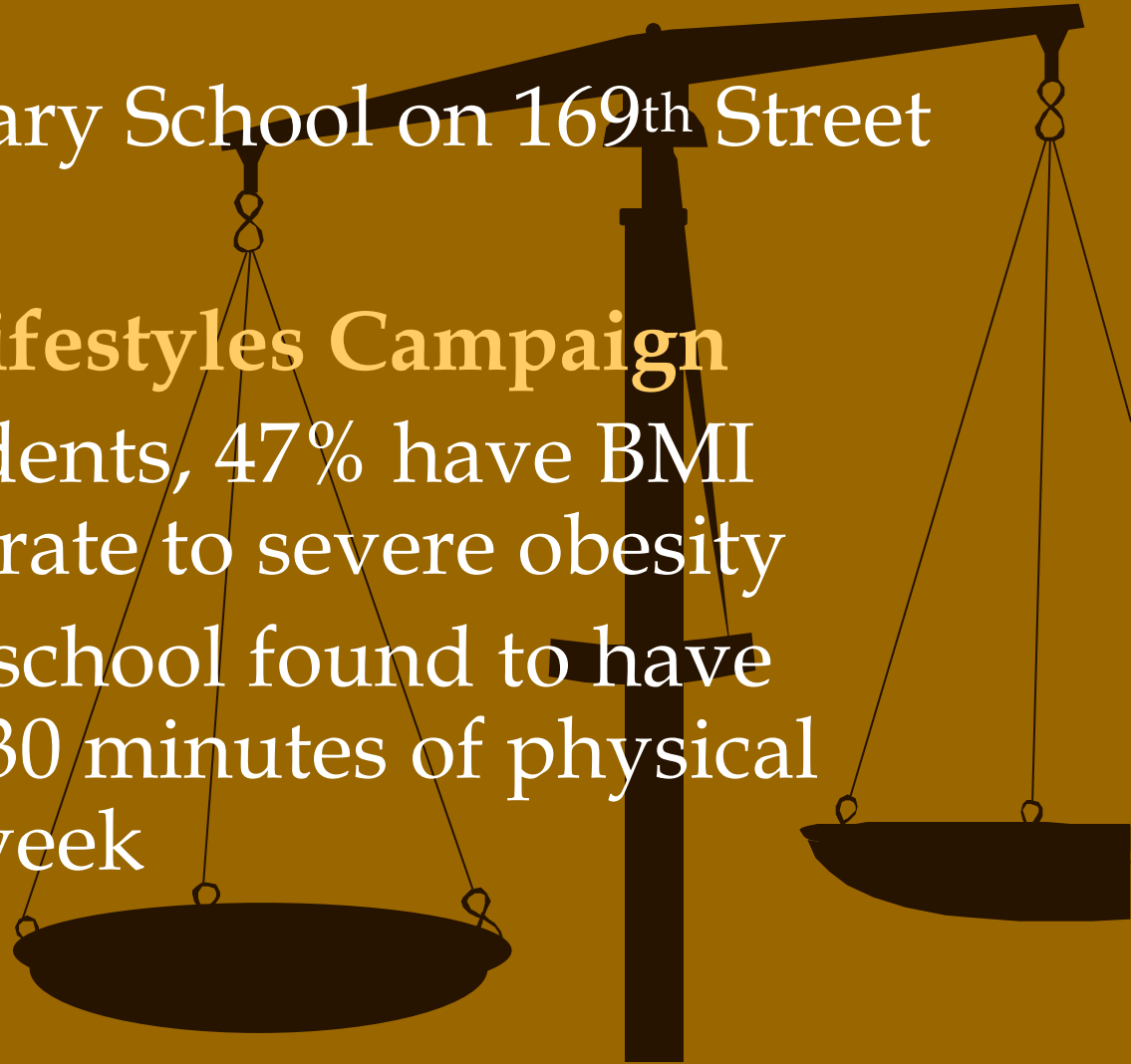


# NYC Public Advocate Survey: *Findings*

- Three-quarters of the schools with students in grades four through six are in violation of New York State regulations mandating at least 120 minutes of physical education for those students
- Only four percent of all schools surveyed have an athletic team
- Only 10 percent have an after-school athletic program
- 14 percent do not have a physical education teacher

At the local level:  
*PS 128 in Washington Heights*

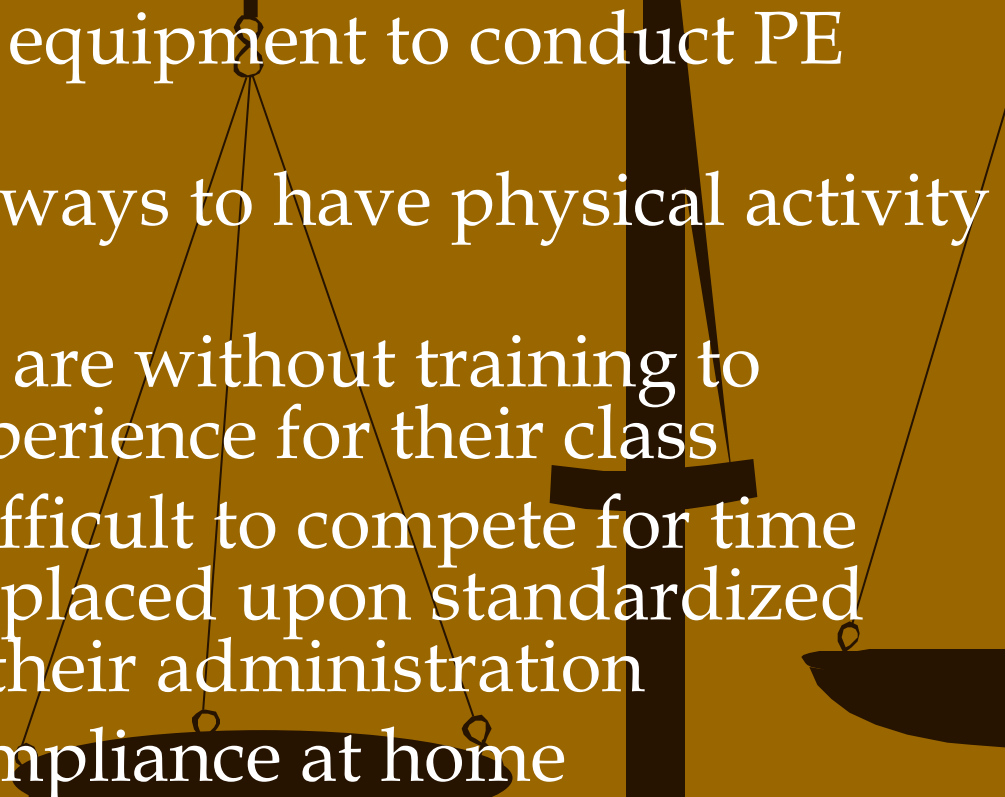
- PS 128 Elementary School on 169<sup>th</sup> Street
- **2002 Healthy Lifestyles Campaign**
- Of the 1400 students, 47% have BMI reflecting moderate to severe obesity
- Students at the school found to have approximately 30 minutes of physical education per week



At the local level:

## *PS 128 in Washington Heights*

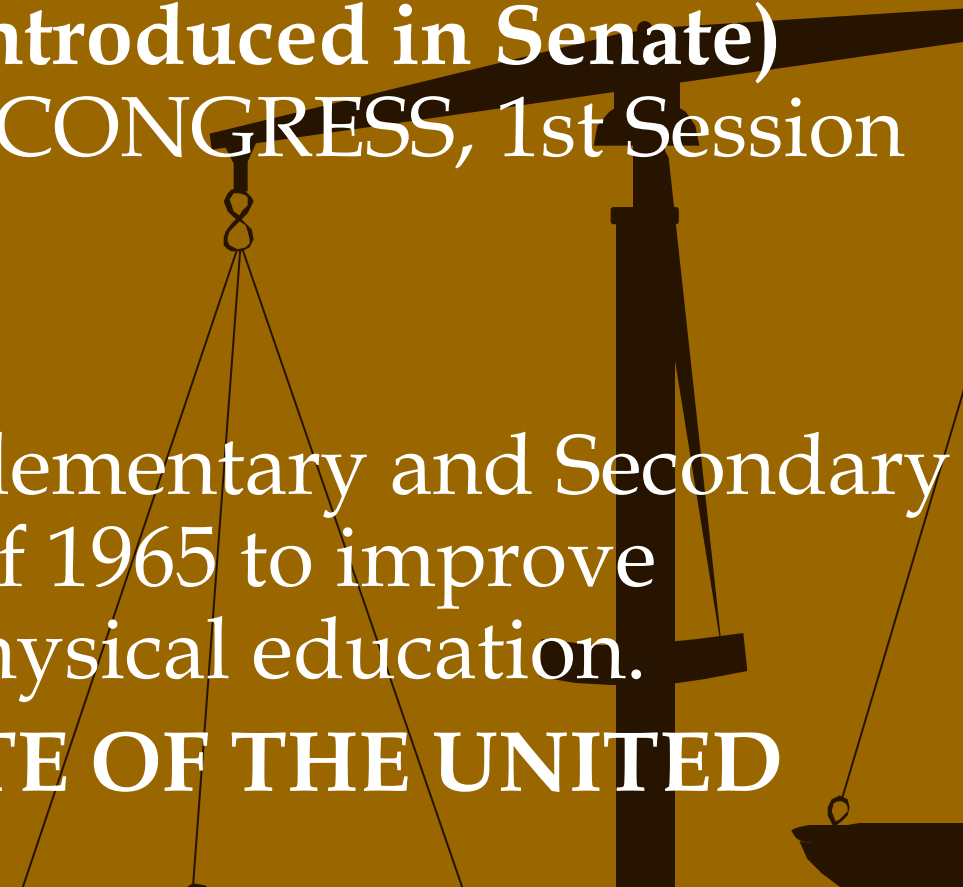
### Problems cited

- Lack of space and equipment to conduct PE classes
  - Difficulty finding ways to have physical activity in the classroom
  - Teachers feel they are without training to supervise a PE experience for their class
  - Teachers find it difficult to compete for time given importance placed upon standardized testing results by their administration
  - Parents lack of compliance at home
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**How can we ensure adequate physical education for our school-aged children?**

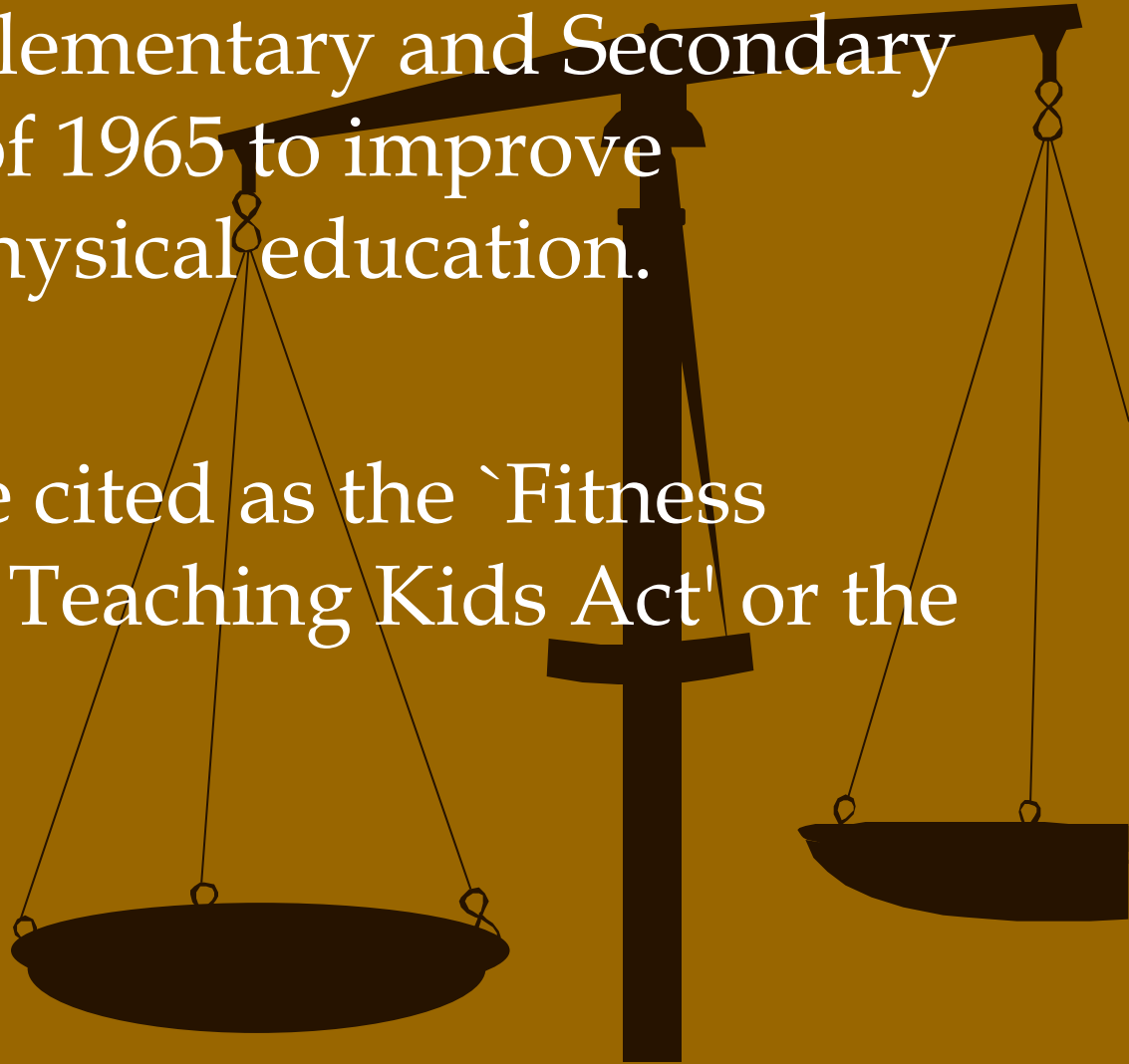


# The bill: FIT Kids Act

- **FIT Kids Act (Introduced in Senate)**  
S 2173 IS; 110th CONGRESS, 1st Session
  - **S. 2173**
  - To amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to improve standards for physical education.
  - **IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES**
- 

# The bill: FIT Kids Act

- To amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to improve standards for physical education.
- This Act may be cited as the 'Fitness Integrated with Teaching Kids Act' or the 'FIT Kids Act'.





# The bill: FIT Kids Act

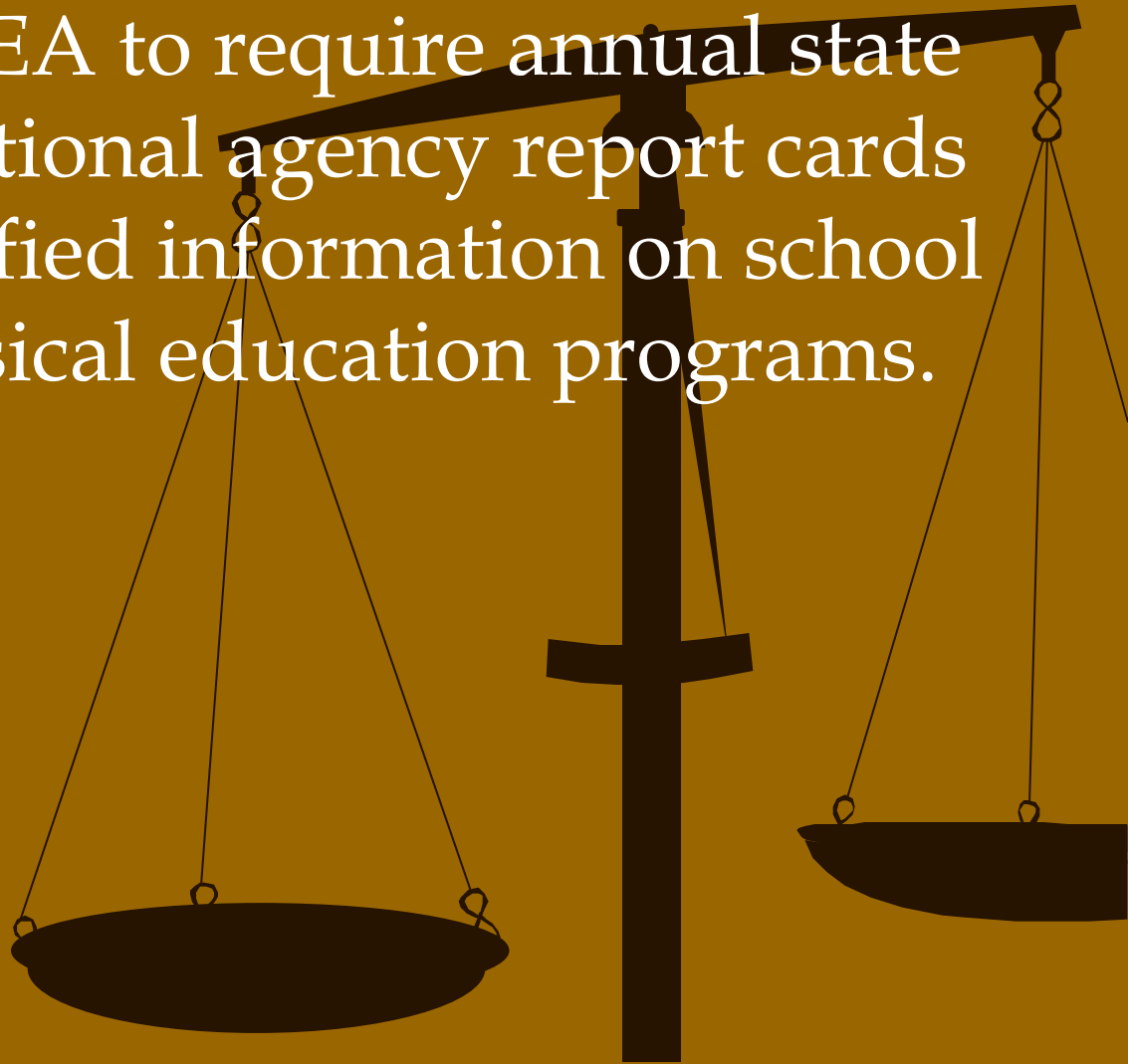
## Fitness Integrated with Teaching KIDS Act

- Requires state accountability systems (expanding the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) to measure not only student academic progress, but their progress toward a national goal of 150 minutes of weekly physical education in elementary school and 225 minutes of weekly physical education in middle and high schools.



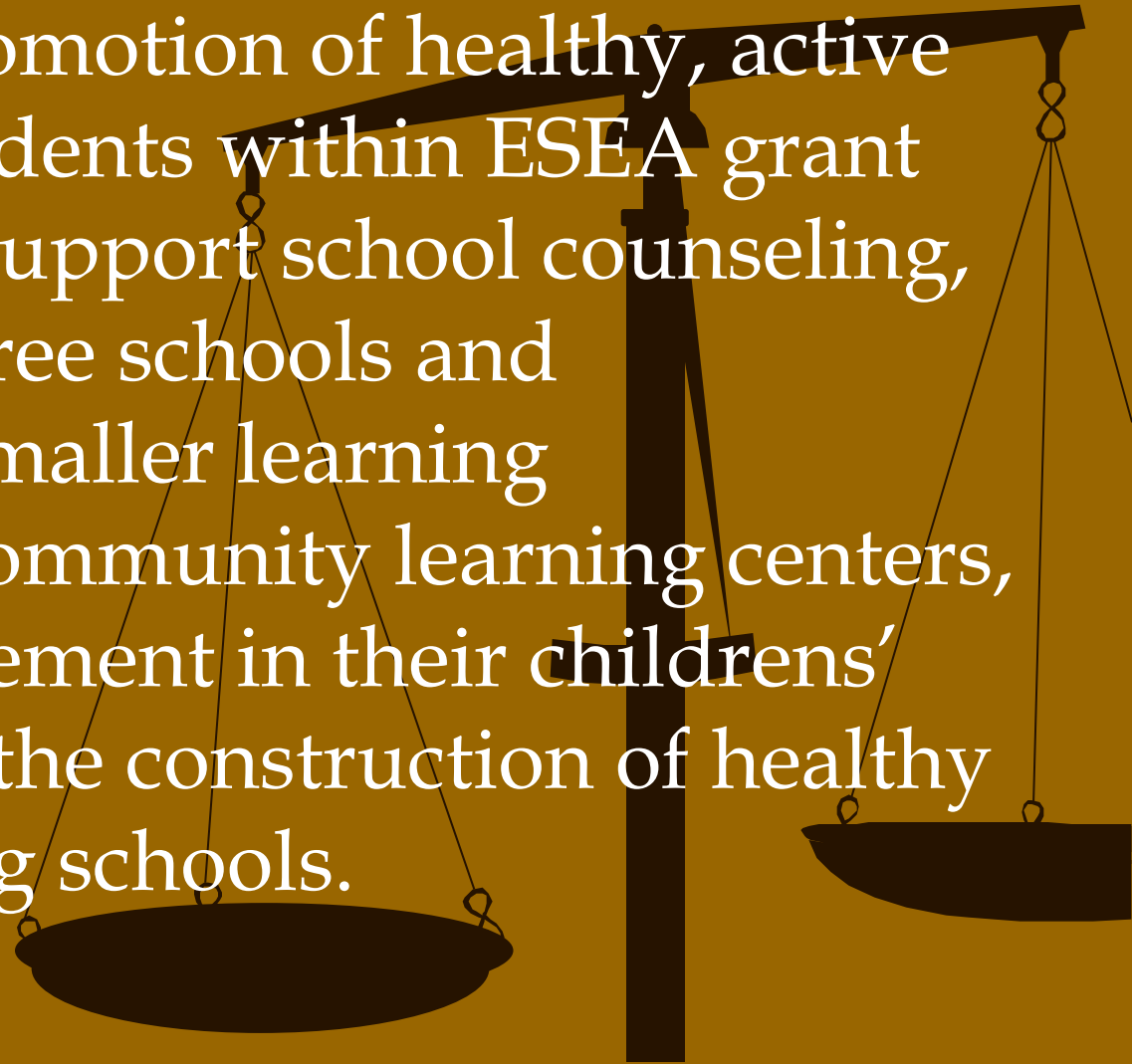
# The bill: FIT Kids Act

- Amends the ESEA to require annual state and local educational agency report cards to include specified information on school health and physical education programs.



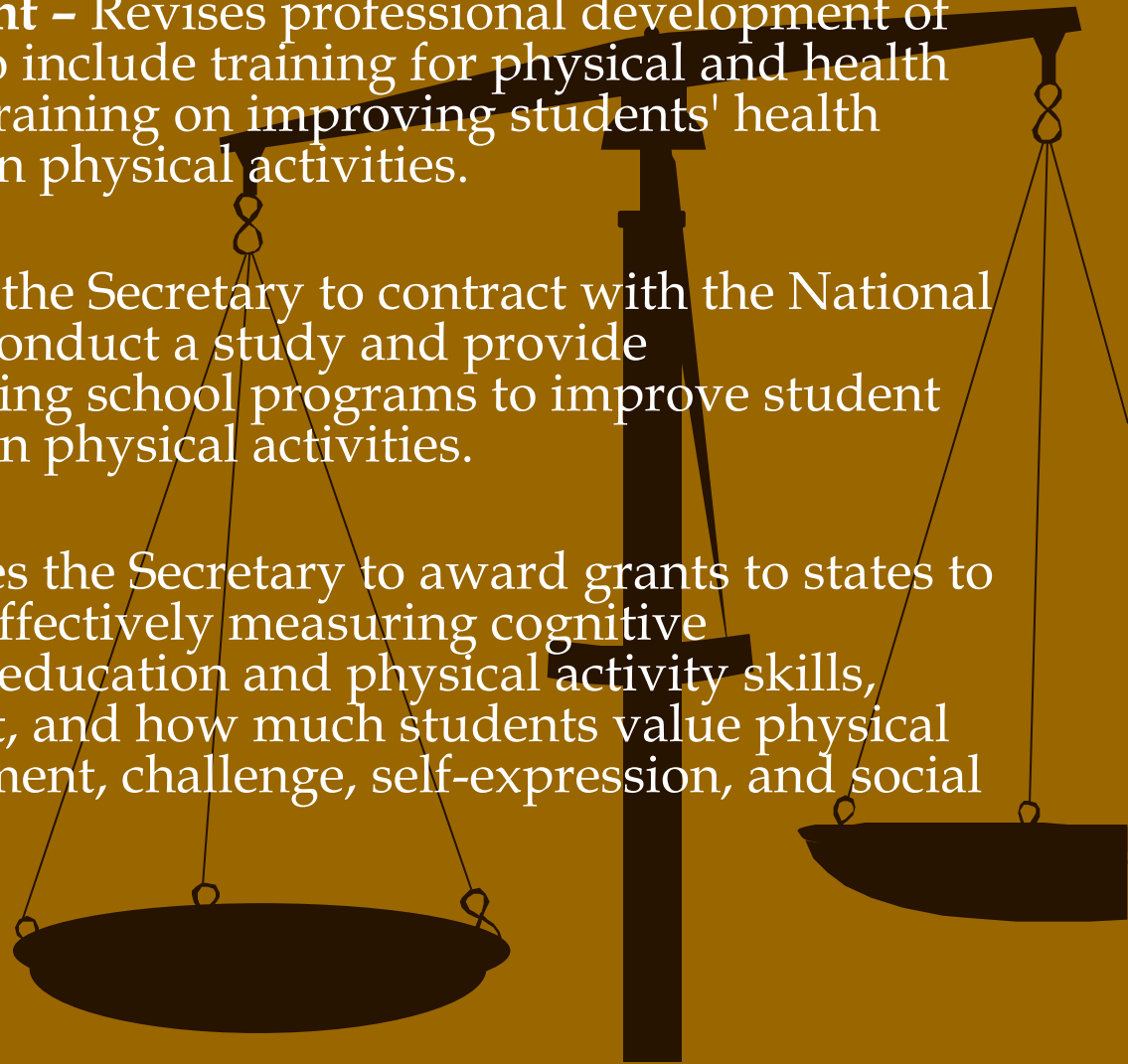
# The bill: FIT Kids Act

- Includes the promotion of healthy, active lifestyles by students within ESEA grant programs that support school counseling, safe and drug-free schools and communities, smaller learning communities, community learning centers, parental involvement in their childrens' education, and the construction of healthy high-performing schools.



# The bill – *additional provisions*

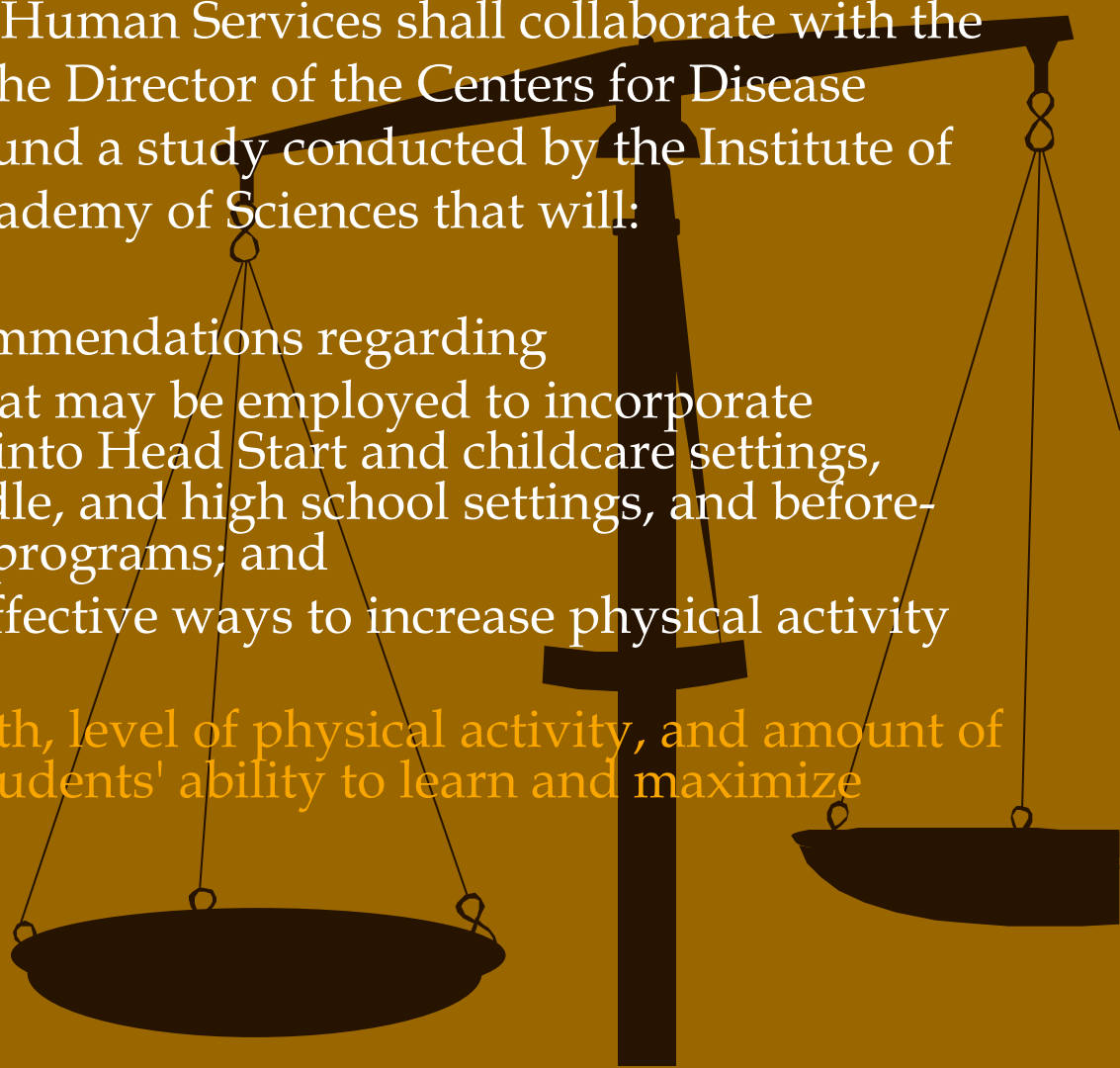
- **Professional development** – Revises professional development of teachers and principals to include training for physical and health education teachers, and training on improving students' health habits and participation in physical activities.
- **Studies/Grants** – Directs the Secretary to contract with the National Academy of Sciences to conduct a study and provide recommendations regarding school programs to improve student health and participation in physical activities.
- **Assessments** – Authorizes the Secretary to award grants to states to implement assessments effectively measuring cognitive development in physical education and physical activity skills, motor skills development, and how much students value physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and social interaction.



# Section 6. IOM Study

The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall collaborate with the Secretary of Education and the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to fund a study conducted by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences that will:

- examine and make recommendations regarding
  - various means that may be employed to incorporate physical activity into Head Start and childcare settings, elementary, middle, and high school settings, and before- and after-school programs; and
  - innovative and effective ways to increase physical activity for all students;
- study the impact of health, level of physical activity, and amount of physical education on students' ability to learn and maximize performance in school



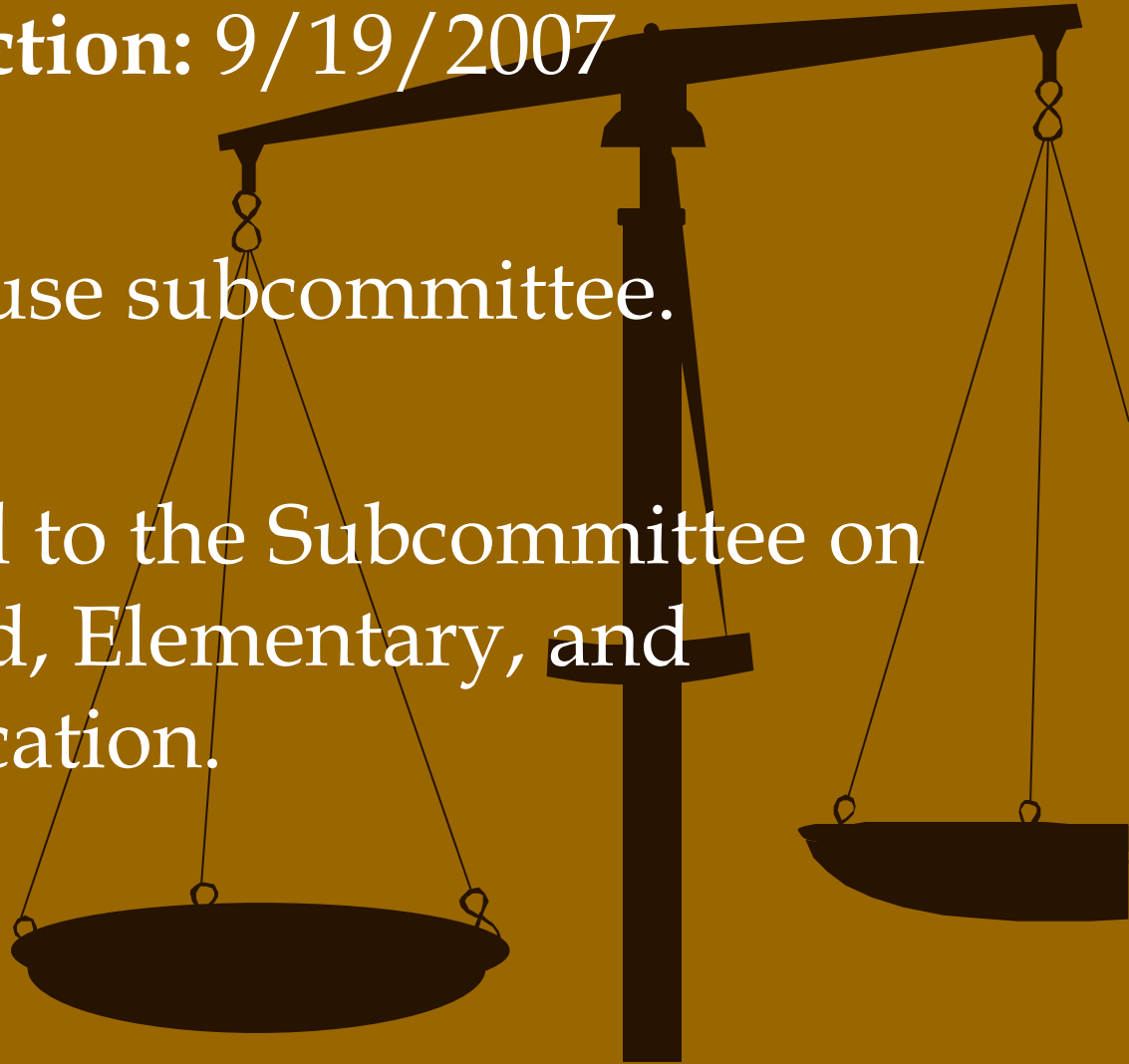
# Section 6. IOM Study

- study and provide specific recommendations for
  - effectively measuring the progress of students, at the school level, in improving their health and well-being, including improving their
    - knowledge, awareness, and behavior changes, related to nutrition and physical activity;
    - cognitive development, and fitness improvement, in physical education;
    - knowledge of lifetime physical activity and health promotion;
    - decrease in obesity ; and
    - levels on overall health indicators; and
  - effectively measuring the progress of students, at the school level, in increasing physical activity.



# Status of the bill

- **Latest Major Action:** 9/19/2007
- **Referred** to House subcommittee.
- **Status:** Referred to the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education.



# AAP Policy Statement



- “Physicians should advocate for the reinstatement of compulsory, quality, daily PE classes in all schools (kindergarten through grade 12) taught by qualified, trained educators.”
- “The curricula should emphasize enjoyable participation in physical activity that helps students develop the knowledge, attitudes, motor skills, behavioral skills, and confidence required to adopt and maintain healthy active lifestyles.”
- “Commitment of adequate resources for program funding, trained PE personnel, safe equipment, and facilities is also recommended.”



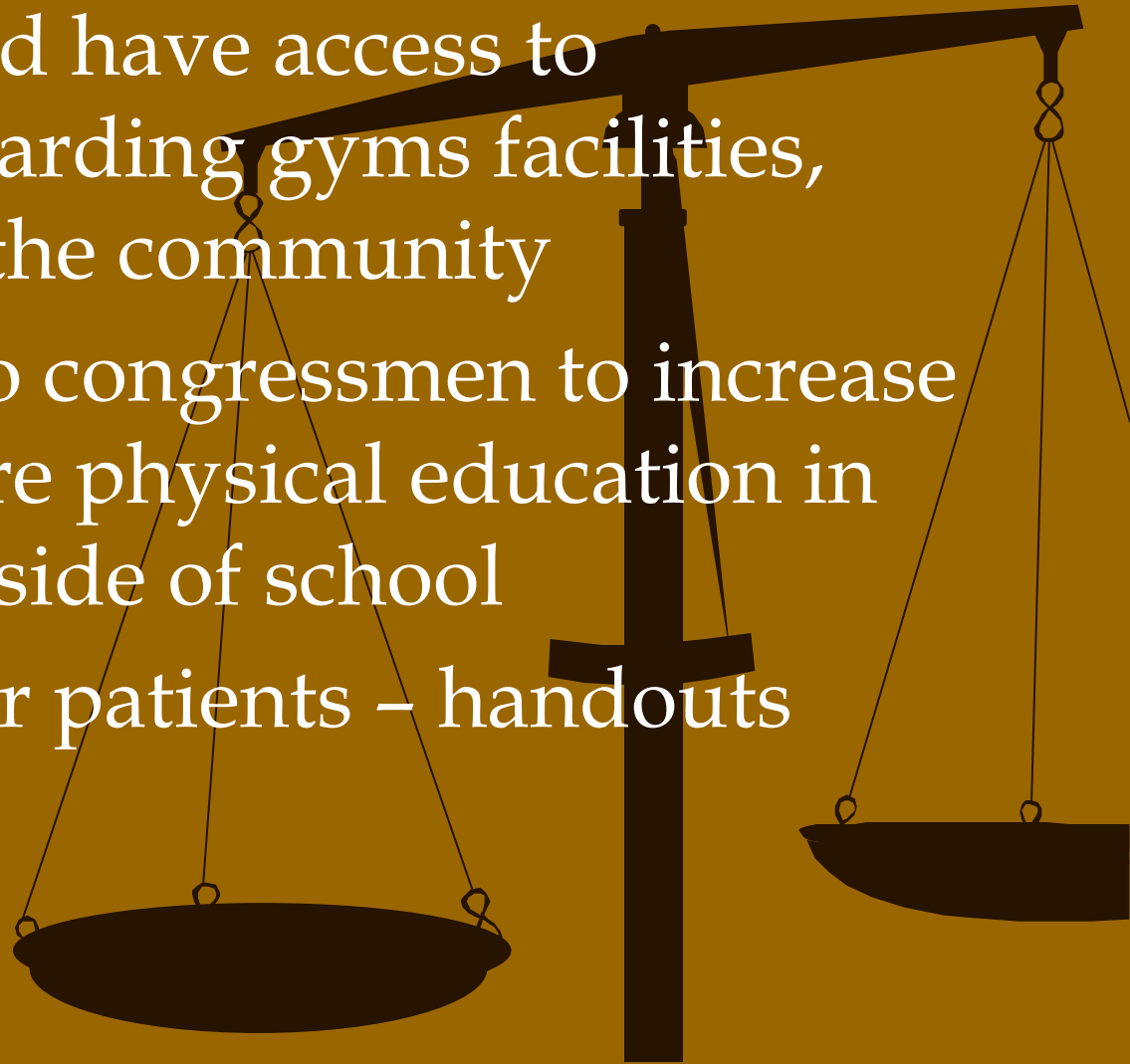
# *Creating FIT KIDS:* Advocacy starts with us

- What can fellow residents do if they are interested in supporting legislation around this topic?

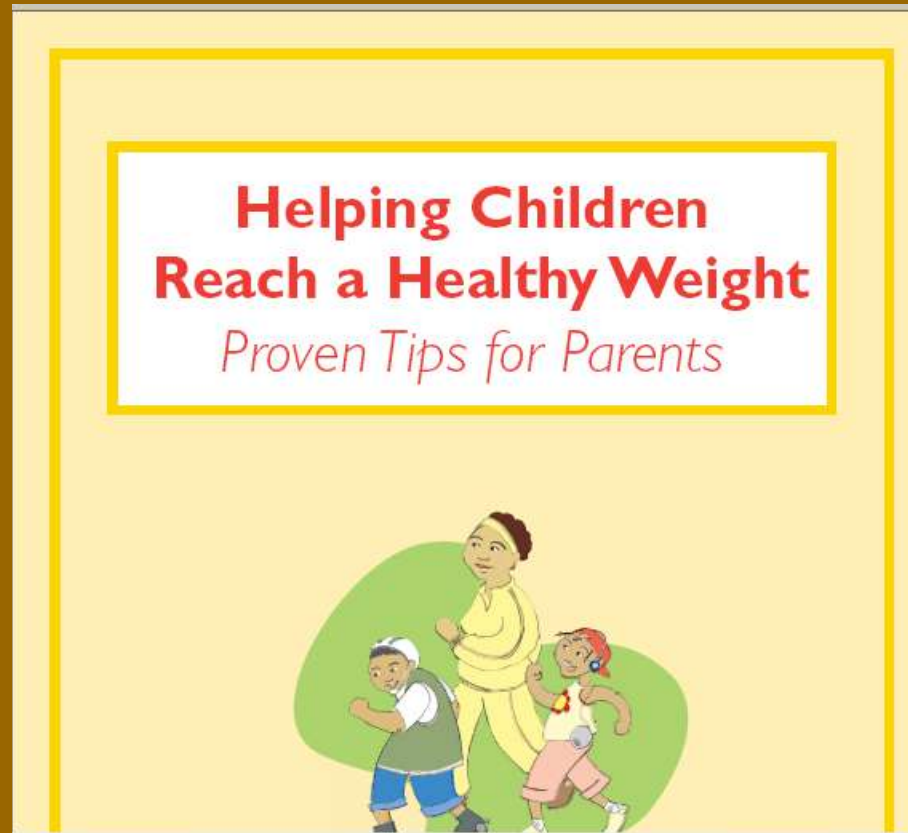


# *Creating FIT KIDS:* Advocacy starts with us

- Residents should have access to information regarding gyms facilities, pools, parks in the community
- Letter writing to congressmen to increase funding for more physical education in schools and outside of school
- Resources to our patients – handouts available online



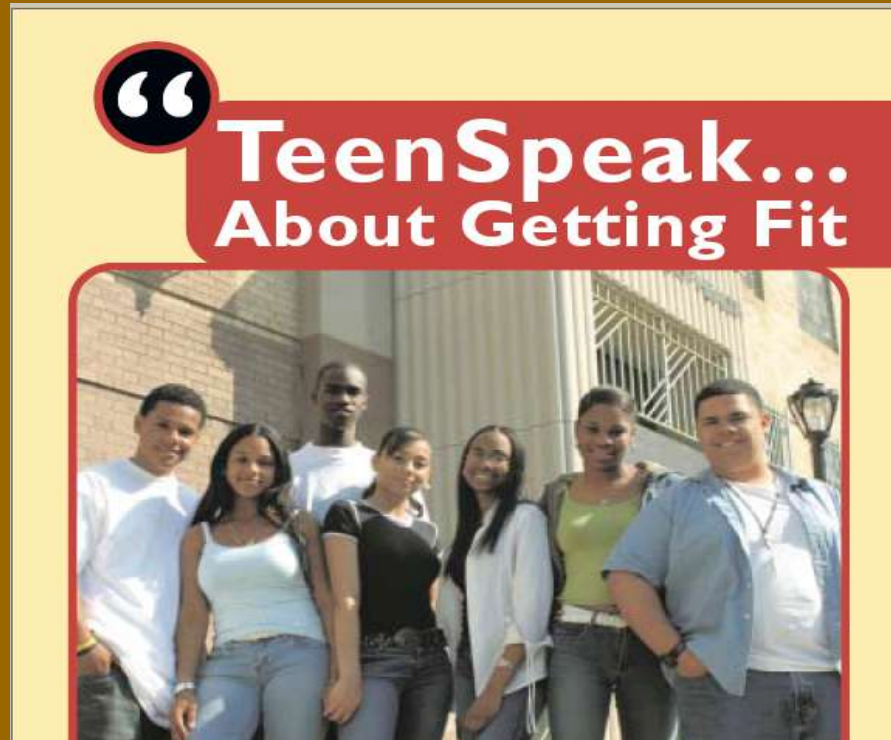
# Resources for patients



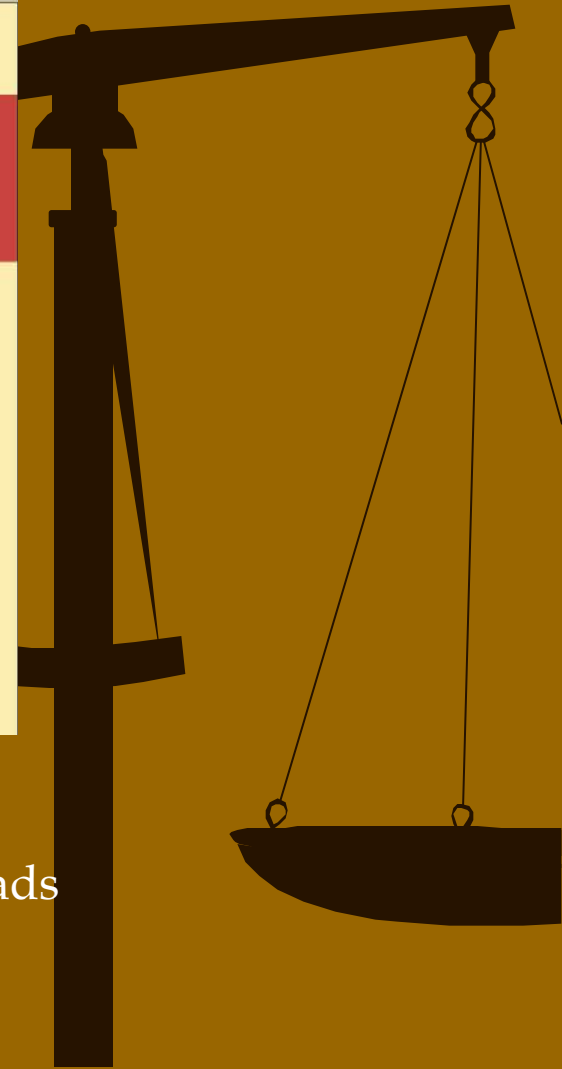
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads>



# Resources for patients



<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads>



# Other legislative efforts: **AHA**



American Heart Association | American Stroke Association

*Learn and Live.*

## **Washington, we have a problem.**

More than 9.2 million children and adolescents (ages 6-19) are considered overweight or obese, based on the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher body mass index (BMI). Overweight adolescents have a 70% chance of becoming overweight adults. Obesity increases an individual's risk for heart disease, diabetes, stroke and many other chronic illnesses and leads to higher health care costs. Obesity also impacts entire families – both those who have to care for ill loved ones and those children whose opportunities are restricted due to their parents' ill health. In fact, children who grow up in families with obese parents are significantly more likely to be obese as adults.

Factors that are linked to an increased risk of being overweight or obese include physical inactivity, poor nutrition, and time spent watching television. Each of these behaviors can be addressed with specific measures that acknowledge the obstacles to good health and work to overcome them.

### **Obstacle: Young people today are overfed and undernourished**

- USDA data indicate that on average, adolescents (12-18 year olds) consume 150 calories more today than they did 25 years ago.<sup>1</sup>
- Soda intake among adolescents has more than doubled in the past 20 years.<sup>2</sup>
- Only 22% of high school students get the recommended number of fruits and vegetables each day and only 17% get at least three servings of milk or dairy per day.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Good News: Nutrition education works**

- Numerous studies have shown that quality nutrition education can improve a child's eating behavior as well as their cholesterol, blood pressure, and other health indicators.<sup>4</sup>

# Other legislative efforts: **NCPA**

National Coalition  
for **Promoting**  
Physical Activity



## Support the Addition of Physical Activity to the Safe and Drug Free Communities Act-HR3438

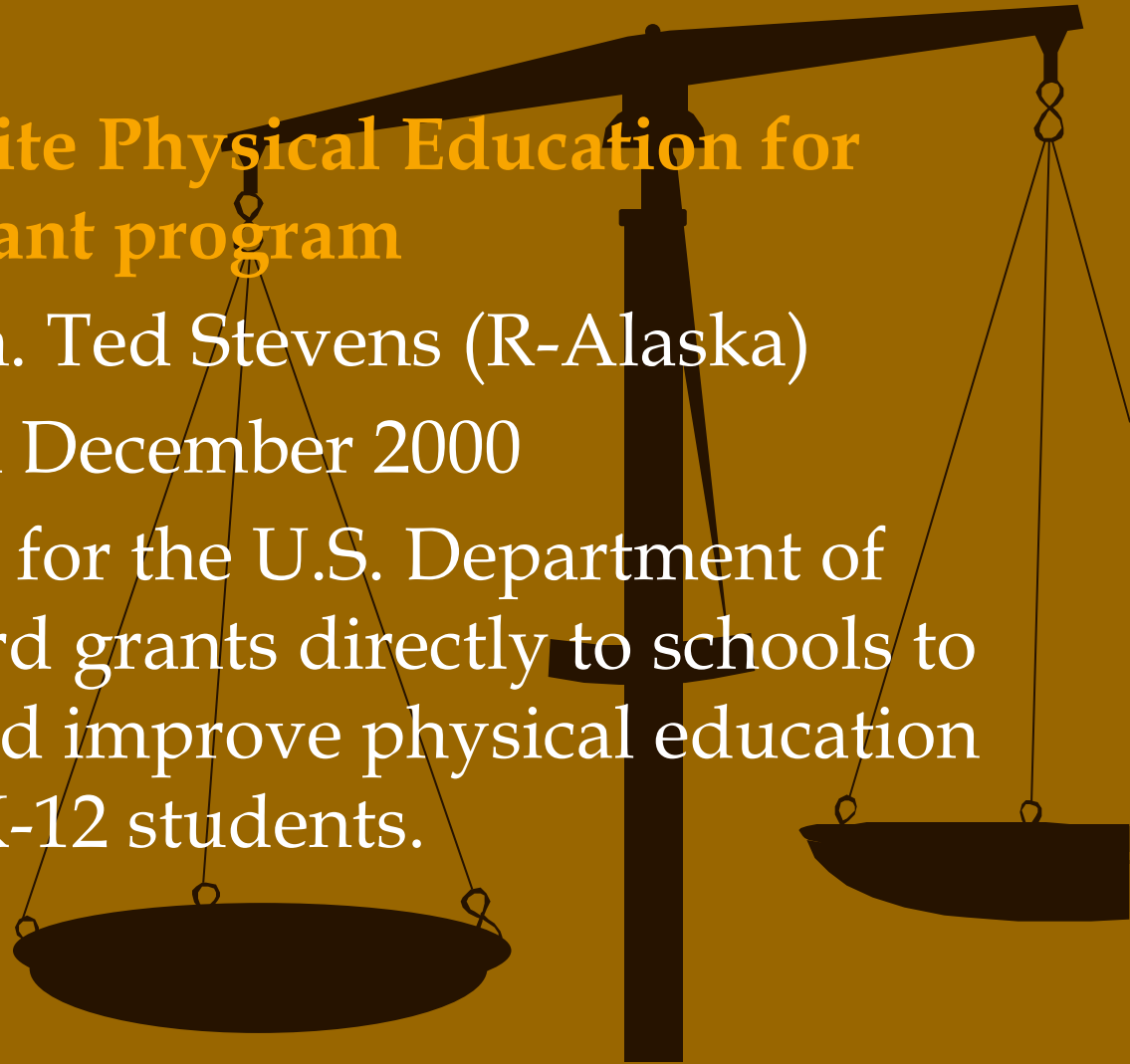
- *A study published in the Journal of School Health (1997) demonstrated that intense physical activity programs have positive effects on academic achievement, including increased concentration; improved mathematics, reading, and writing test scores; and also reduced disruptive behavior.*
- *Programs that increase physical activity can help reverse the childhood obesity epidemic in the United States. According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), experts rank “increasing physical activity” as the most important strategy for preventing or reducing childhood obesity.*
- *Disadvantaged youth often have the least access to safe venues for physical activity – underscoring the benefits of in-school and out-of-school physical activity programs. The GAO finds that “areas of low socioeconomic status and high minority populations had fewer venues for physical activity” and “adolescents in unsafe neighborhoods engage in less physical activity” than their peers.*

Physical Activity plays a significant role in academic success as well as decreasing the non-social and disruptive behavior that can disrupt efforts toward a positive community atmosphere. The correlation between physical activity and academic success is one that is often overlooked in schools across the country. Studies have demonstrated that physical education and physical activity programs have positive effects on academic

# Other legislative efforts:

## **PEP grant program**

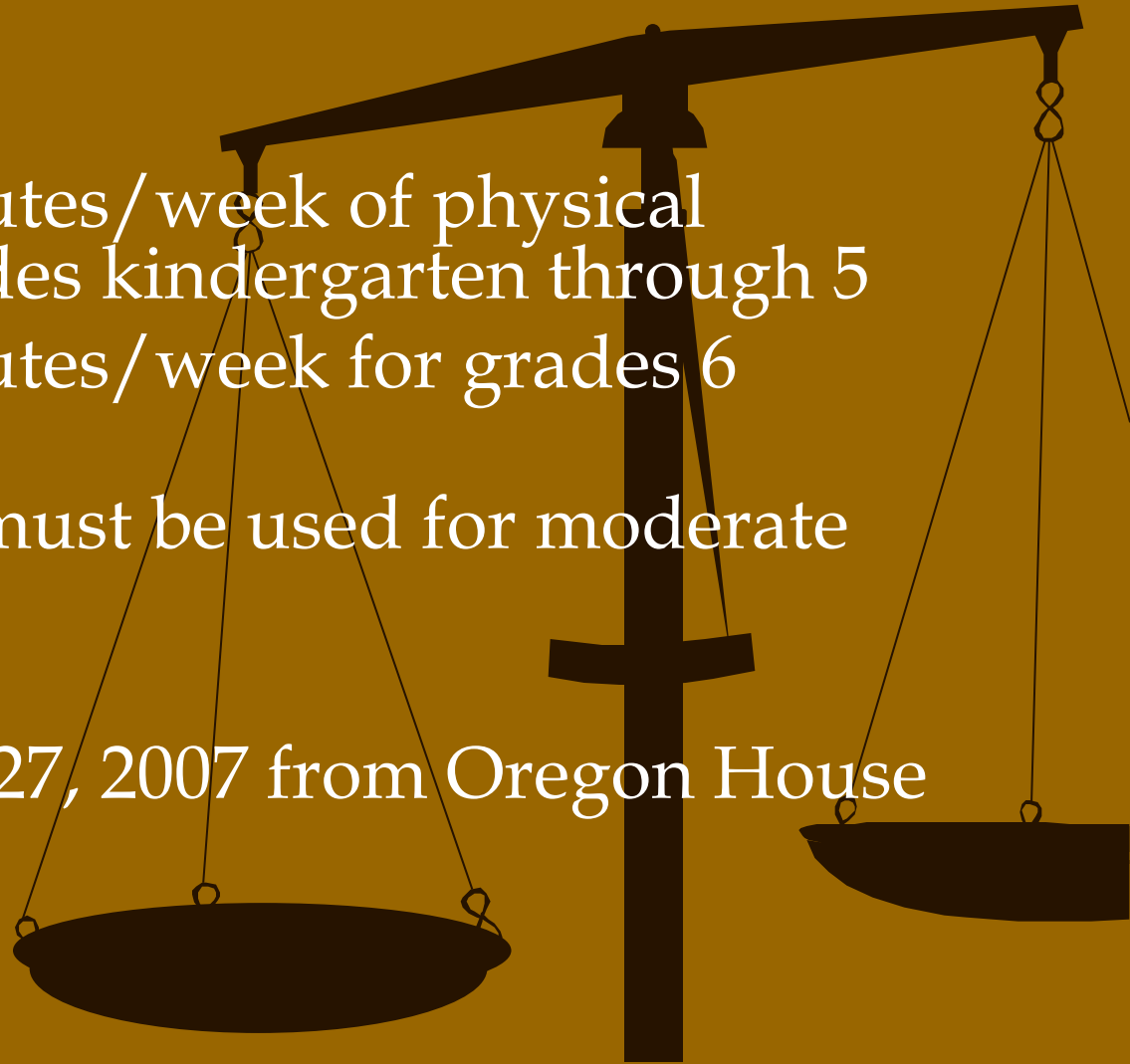
- **The Carol M. White Physical Education for Progress (PEP) grant program**
- Introduced by Sen. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska)
- Signed into law in December 2000
- Established a way for the U.S. Department of Education to award grants directly to schools to create, expand, and improve physical education programs for all K-12 students.



# Other legislative efforts:

## House Bill 3141

- Requires 150 minutes/week of physical education for grades kindergarten through 5
- Requires 225 minutes/week for grades 6 through 8.
- Half of that time must be used for moderate physical activity.
- (Law passed July 27, 2007 from Oregon House Bill 3141)





**We can make a difference**



**January 30<sup>th</sup>:  
Hearing on Physical Education**

