

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4124

To amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize funding for the establishment of a program on children and the media within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to study the role and impact of electronic media in the development of children.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 24, 2005

Mr. MARKEY introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize funding for the establishment of a program on children and the media within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to study the role and impact of electronic media in the development of children.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Children and Media
5 Research Advancement Act” or the “CAMRA Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

2 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
3 ings:

4 (1) Congress recognized the important role of
5 electronic media in children’s lives when it passed
6 the Children’s Television Act of 1990 (Public Law
7 101–437) and the Telecommunications Act of 1996
8 (Public Law 104–104), both of which documented
9 public concerns about how electronic media products
10 influence children’s development.

11 (2) Congress has held hearings over the past
12 several decades to examine the impact of specific
13 types of media products such as violent television,
14 movies, and video games on children’s and adoles-
15 cents’ health and development. These hearings and
16 other public discussions about the role of media in
17 children’s and adolescents’ development require be-
18 havioral and social science research to inform the
19 policy deliberations.

20 (3) There are important gaps in our knowledge
21 about the role of electronic media and in particular,
22 the newer interactive digital media, in children’s and
23 adolescents’ healthy development. The consequences
24 of very early screen usage by babies and toddlers on
25 children’s cognitive growth are not yet understood,
26 nor has a research base been established on the psy-

1 chological consequences of high definition interactive
2 media and other format differences for child and ad-
3 olescent viewers.

4 (4) Studies have shown that children who pri-
5 marily watch educational shows on television during
6 their preschool years are significantly more success-
7 ful in school 10 years later even when critical con-
8 tributors to the child's environment are factored in,
9 including their household income, parent's education,
10 and intelligence.

11 (5) The early stages of childhood are a critical
12 formative period for development. Virtually every as-
13 pect of human development is affected by the envi-
14 ronments and experiences that one encounters dur-
15 ing his or her early childhood years, and media expo-
16 sure is an increasing part of every child's social and
17 physical environment.

18 (6) As of the late 1990's, just before the Na-
19 tional Institute of Child Health and Human Devel-
20 opment funded 5 studies on the role of sexual mes-
21 sages in the media on children's and adolescents'
22 sexual attitudes and sexual practices, a review of re-
23 search in this area found only 15 studies ever con-
24 ducted in the United States on this topic, even dur-
25 ing a time of growing concerns about HIV infection.

1 (7) In 2001, a National Academy of Sciences
2 study group charged with studying Internet pornog-
3 raphy exposure on youth found virtually no lit-
4 erature about how much children and adolescents
5 were exposed to Internet pornography or how such
6 content impacts their development.

7 (8) In order to develop strategies that maximize
8 the positive and minimize the negative effects of
9 each medium on children’s physical, cognitive, social,
10 and emotional development, it would be beneficial to
11 develop a research program that can track the media
12 habits of young children and their families over time
13 using valid and reliable research methods.

14 (9) Research about the impact of the media on
15 children and adolescents is not presently supported
16 through one primary programmatic effort. The re-
17 sponsibility for directing the research is distributed
18 across disparate agencies in an uncoordinated fash-
19 ion, or is overlooked entirely. The lack of any cen-
20 tralized organization for research minimizes the
21 value of the knowledge produced by individual stud-
22 ies. A more productive approach for generating valu-
23 able findings about the impact of the media on chil-
24 dren and adolescents would be to establish a single,

1 well-coordinated research effort with primary respon-
2 sibility for directing the research agenda.

3 (10) Due to the paucity of research about elec-
4 tronic media, educators and others interested in im-
5 plementing electronic media literacy initiatives do
6 not have the evidence needed to design, implement,
7 or assess the value of these efforts.

8 (b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act to enable
9 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to—

10 (1) examine the role and impact of electronic
11 media in children’s and adolescents’ cognitive, social,
12 emotional, physical, and behavioral development; and

13 (2) provide for a report to Congress containing
14 the empirical evidence and other results produced by
15 the research funded through grants under this Act.

16 **SEC. 3. RESEARCH ON THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF ELEC-**
17 **TRONIC MEDIA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF**
18 **CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS.**

19 Part B of title III of the Public Health Service Act
20 (42 U.S.C. 243 et seq.) is amended by inserting after sec-
21 tion 317S the following:

1 **“SEC. 317T. RESEARCH ON THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF**
2 **ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN THE DEVELOPMENT**
3 **OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS.**

4 “(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 6 months after
5 the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary,
6 acting through the Director of the Centers for Disease
7 Control and Prevention, shall enter into appropriate ar-
8 rangements with the National Academy of Sciences in col-
9 laboration with the Institute of Medicine to establish an
10 independent panel of experts (in this section referred to
11 as the ‘panel’) to review, synthesize, and report on re-
12 search, theory, and applications in the social, behavioral,
13 and biological sciences and to establish research priorities
14 regarding the positive and negative impact of the content
15 and use of electronic media, including television, motion
16 pictures, DVD’s, interactive video games, and the Inter-
17 net, on youth in the following core areas of child and ado-
18 lescent development:

19 “(1) COGNITIVE.—The role and impact of
20 media use and exposure in the development of chil-
21 dren and adolescents within such cognitive areas as
22 language development, attention span, problem solv-
23 ing skills (such as the ability to conduct multiple
24 tasks or ‘multitask’), visual and spatial skills, read-
25 ing, and other learning abilities.

1 “(2) PHYSICAL.—The role and impact of media
2 use and exposure on children’s and adolescents’
3 physical coordination, diet, exercise, sleeping and
4 eating routines, and other areas of physical develop-
5 ment.

6 “(3) SOCIO-BEHAVIORAL.—The influence of
7 interactive media on children’s and adolescents’ fam-
8 ily activities and peer relationships, including indoor
9 and outdoor play time, interaction with parents, con-
10 sumption habits, social relationships, aggression,
11 prosocial behavior, and other patterns of develop-
12 ment.

13 “(b) PILOT PROJECTS.—Upon the enactment of this
14 section and prior to the report deadline established by sub-
15 section (f)(1), the Secretary shall initiate and support pilot
16 projects to supplement and inform the panel in its work.
17 Such pilot projects shall consider the role of media expo-
18 sure on—

19 “(1) cognitive and social development during in-
20 fancy and early childhood; and

21 “(2) the development of childhood and adoles-
22 cent obesity, particularly as a function of media ad-
23 vertising and sedentary lifestyles that may co-occur
24 with heavy media diets.

1 “(c) RESEARCH PROGRAM.—Upon completion of the
2 review under subsection (a), the Secretary shall conduct
3 or support additional research determined to be necessary
4 by the panel concerning the role and impact of electronic
5 media in the cognitive, physical, and socio-behavioral de-
6 velopment of children and adolescents with a particular
7 focus on the impact of factors such as media content, for-
8 mat, length of exposure, the age of the child or adolescent,
9 and the nature of parental involvement. Such program
10 shall include extramural and intramural research and shall
11 support collaborative efforts to link such research to other
12 Department of Health and Human Services research in-
13 vestigations on early child health and development.

14 “(d) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—To be eligible to receive
15 a grant under subsection (b) or (c), an entity shall—

16 “(1) prepare and submit to the Secretary an
17 application at such time, in such manner, and con-
18 taining such information as the Secretary may re-
19 quire; and

20 “(2) agree to use amounts received under the
21 grant to carry out activities that establish or imple-
22 ment a research program relating to the effects of
23 media on children and adolescents pursuant to such
24 guidelines as the Secretary may require relating to
25 consultations with experts in the area of study.

1 “(e) USE OF FUNDS RELATING TO THE MEDIA’S
2 ROLE IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD OR ADOLESCENT.—An
3 entity shall use amounts received under a grant under sub-
4 section (c) to conduct research concerning the social, cog-
5 nitive, emotional, physical, and behavioral development of
6 children or adolescents as related to electronic mass
7 media, including the areas of—

8 “(1) television;

9 “(2) motion pictures;

10 “(3) DVD’s;

11 “(4) interactive video games;

12 “(5) the Internet;

13 “(6) cell phones; and

14 “(7) any other electronic mass media, including
15 portable wireless communications devices and per-
16 sonal digital assistants, used to deliver media di-
17 rectly to children and adolescents.

18 “(f) REPORTS.—

19 “(1) REPORT TO DIRECTOR.—Not later than 12
20 months after the date of the establishment of the
21 panel pursuant to subsection (a), the panel shall
22 submit the report required under such subsection to
23 the Secretary.

24 “(2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than
25 December 31, 2011, the Secretary shall prepare and

1 submit to the Committee on Health, Education,
2 Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Com-
3 mittee on Energy and Commerce of the House of
4 Representatives a report that—

5 “(A) summarizes the empirical evidence
6 and other results produced by the research
7 under this section in a manner that can be un-
8 derstood by the general public;

9 “(B) places the evidence in context with
10 other evidence and knowledge generated by the
11 scientific community that address the same or
12 related topics; and

13 “(C) discusses the implications of the col-
14 lective body of scientific evidence and knowledge
15 regarding the role and impact of the media on
16 children and adolescents, and makes rec-
17 ommendations on how scientific evidence and
18 knowledge may be used to improve the healthy
19 developmental and learning capacities of chil-
20 dren and adolescents.

21 “(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
22 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this sec-
23 tion—

24 “(1) \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2006;

25 “(2) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2007;

- 1 “(3) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2008;
- 2 “(4) \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2009; and
- 3 “(5) \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2010.”.

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