

By: Lucio

S.C.R. No. 49

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1           WHEREAS, Childhood and adolescent obesity has reached  
2 epidemic proportions among American youth; the American Obesity  
3 Association (AOA) revealed in 2000 that the incidence of obesity in  
4 children and adolescents had quadrupled since 1971, with 15.3  
5 percent of children ages 6 to 11 and 15.5 percent of adolescents  
6 ages 12 to 19 identified as obese; and

7           WHEREAS, Even more alarming is the increasing prevalence of  
8 overweight among the nation's children and adolescents, which is  
9 commonly an indicator of potential health problems as an adult;  
10 according to the same study by the AOA, approximately 30.3 percent  
11 of children ages 6 to 11 and 30.4 percent of adolescents ages 12 to  
12 19 are overweight, and overweight children aged 10 to 14 with at  
13 least one overweight or obese parent were reported to have a 79  
14 percent likelihood of overweight persisting into adulthood; and

15           WHEREAS, The potential lifelong consequences of this  
16 epidemic are evidenced by the fact that overweight and obese  
17 children are at higher risk for serious long-term health problems,  
18 including Type II diabetes, cardiovascular disease, stroke,  
19 hypertension, asthma, orthopedic complications, sleep apnea, gall  
20 bladder disease, and certain cancers; the Texas Department of  
21 Health reports that 62.4 percent of all deaths in Texas result from  
22 four of these chronic diseases--heart disease, cancer, stroke, and  
23 diabetes--each of which can be prevented through healthy habits  
24 developed in childhood; and

1           WHEREAS, The school environment plays a critical role in  
2 establishing a child's nutritional regimen and meeting a child's  
3 dietary needs; indeed, a child who eats a school breakfast and lunch  
4 that meet the nutritional standards established by the United  
5 States Department of Agriculture for the national school breakfast  
6 and national school lunch programs receives 60 percent of the  
7 child's average daily nutritional needs; and

8           WHEREAS, Overweight and obesity are far-reaching problems  
9 not unique to any one racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group; the  
10 Texas Legislature has long recognized that the health of the state  
11 of Texas depends on the health of its children and this latest  
12 crisis merits its utmost attention; now, therefore, be it

13           RESOLVED, That the 78th Legislature of the State of Texas  
14 hereby request the lieutenant governor and the speaker of the house  
15 of representatives to create a joint interim committee to study  
16 nutrition in public schools, obesity- and nutrition-related  
17 diseases, a universal breakfast and lunch program, and competitive  
18 food and vending machine contracts, revenues, and accountability of  
19 revenues; and, be it further

20           RESOLVED, That the interim committee be composed of the  
21 following members: the commissioner of education, the commissioner  
22 of health, the commissioner of agriculture, three members of the  
23 senate, appointed by the lieutenant governor, and three members of  
24 the house of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the  
25 house; and, be it further

26           RESOLVED, That the governor be invited to appoint members to  
27 the committee with the request that such appointees include the

1 following: one member who is a physician who provides health  
2 services to school-aged children, one member who has expertise in  
3 nutrition, one member who is a parent of a school-aged child, and  
4 one member who is a superintendent of schools or school principal;  
5 and, be it further

6           RESOLVED, That the interim committee hold hearings  
7 throughout the state during the interim of the 78th Legislature to:

8           (1) determine the nutritional content and quality of  
9 foods and beverages served to public school children, including  
10 food service meals, a la carte foods, and competitive foods and  
11 vending machines;

12           (2) evaluate the short- and long-term financial,  
13 psychological, and physiological impact of obesity in public school  
14 children;

15           (3) assess the academic, emotional, and health value  
16 of a universal breakfast and lunch program by evaluating  
17 schoolchildren from school districts that provide everyone a free  
18 or reduced-price breakfast and lunch;

19           (4) evaluate school contracts relating to competitive  
20 food products and vending machines to determine economic and other  
21 impacts of potential conflicts of interest; the length of  
22 contracts; advertising and marketing of competitive food products;  
23 revenues realized by schools and school districts arising from the  
24 sale of competitive food products; officials in charge of receiving  
25 and disbursing revenue and the accounting of that revenue; and  
26 losses sustained by each school district's food service program to  
27 competitive foods; and

1           (5) consult with the School Health Advisory Council to  
2 carry out its duties; and, be it further

3           RESOLVED, That the committee's proceedings and operations be  
4 governed by such general rules and policies for joint interim  
5 committees as the 78th Legislature may adopt and that such rules and  
6 policies supersede the provisions of this resolution to the extent  
7 of any conflict; and, be it further

8           RESOLVED, That the interim committee submit a full report,  
9 including findings and recommendations to the governor, the  
10 lieutenant governor, and the speaker of the house not later than  
11 October 1, 2004.