

By: Veasey

H.C.R. No. 87

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1           WHEREAS, During the past four decades, as Americans have  
2 increased their consumption of highly processed foods, obesity  
3 rates have soared among all age groups and have increased more than  
4 fourfold among children ages 6 to 11; today, nearly a third of  
5 children and adolescents are overweight or obese, which places them  
6 at higher risk for a host of serious illnesses; obese children are  
7 being diagnosed with health problems previously considered to be  
8 adult illnesses, including heart disease, stroke, asthma, and  
9 certain types of cancer; childhood obesity alone costs the United  
10 States an estimated \$14 billion in health care expenses, and it is  
11 estimated that the obesity epidemic overall costs the nation \$117  
12 billion per year in direct medical expenses and indirect costs; and

13           WHEREAS, Low-income individuals are particularly at risk for  
14 obesity-related diseases; accordingly, the United States  
15 Department of Agriculture has initiated an incentives-based  
16 program to promote healthier eating among participants in the  
17 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as the  
18 food stamp program; and

19           WHEREAS, The 2008 federal Farm Bill authorized \$20 million  
20 for USDA to test whether incentives to buy fresh produce can  
21 increase the purchase of healthy foods; the Healthy Incentives  
22 Pilot is being conducted in Hampden County, Massachusetts, where  
23 7,500 randomly selected SNAP households will receive a 30-cent  
24 bonus for every dollar they spend on fruits and vegetables using

1 their SNAP Electronic Benefit Transfer cards; and

2 WHEREAS, Processed foods high in fat and sugar are less  
3 expensive than fresh produce, and this pilot program represents a  
4 significant step toward reducing the financial barriers that  
5 prevent low-income residents from adopting healthier eating  
6 habits; and

7 WHEREAS, Over the course of a year, more than one in seven  
8 Americans participate in SNAP, half of them being children, and it  
9 is vital that this program promote healthy eating as well as food  
10 security; in a 2008 report, the U.S. Government Accountability  
11 Office found encouraging results from studies examining the  
12 effectiveness of financial incentives to increase fruit and  
13 vegetable consumption among SNAP households; and

14 WHEREAS, The Healthy Incentives Pilot has the potential to  
15 positively influence the diets of low-income individuals, thereby  
16 reducing obesity and its attendant health care costs, and with such  
17 critical outcomes at stake, the program should not be limited to  
18 just one community; now, therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, That the 82nd Legislature of the State of Texas  
20 hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to expand the  
21 Healthy Incentives Pilot to communities across the country; and, be  
22 it further

23 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official  
24 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to  
25 the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of  
26 Representatives of the United States Congress, to the secretary of  
27 agriculture, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to

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1 Congress with the request that this resolution be entered in the  
2 Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United  
3 States of America.