



# House Joint Resolution 637 (2007)

Joint Subcommittee to Study Childhood Obesity in Virginia's  
Public Schools

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House Room C, General Assembly Building

Jessica Eades, Staff Attorney

Nicole Seeds, Staff Attorney



## HJR 637 (2007) Purpose

- A one year study to examine the prevalence of childhood obesity in the Commonwealth and develop legislative measures to combat the problem of childhood obesity



## HJR 637 (2007) Charges to the Joint Subcommittee

- Ascertain methods of combating childhood obesity in the public schools
- Examine the relationship between the health and physical education curriculum; public policies; social, economic, and cultural influences; media messages; and the incidence of overweight and obese students in the public schools
- Examine methods to increase parental involvement and education to ensure proper nutrition of children
- Survey other states to determine practices that have been useful in combating childhood obesity



## HJR 637 (2007) Parameters

- Shall provide opportunities for the participation of the Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Medical Society of Virginia, the Old Dominion Medical Society, the School Nutrition Association of Virginia, parents, students, the education community, business and industry, and other interested parties so that they may share their perspectives on the issues, problems, and solutions related to childhood obesity



## HJR 637 (2007) Parameters cont'd

- Technical assistance shall be provided by the Department of Education and the Department of Health
- Limited to four meetings
- Meetings must be completed by November 30, 2007
- An executive summary of the joint subcommittee's findings and recommendations must be submitted no later than the first day of the 2008 Session



## Senate Special Subcommittee to Study SB 206 (Edwards) – 2006 Interim

- During the 2006 Regular Session, Senator Potts appointed a special subcommittee of the Senate Education and Health Committee to study SB 206 (Edwards) and examine the issues relating to childhood obesity.
- Senators Whipple (Chair), Lucas, and Rerras were appointed to serve as the special subcommittee



## SB 206 (Edwards)

- Required the Board of Education to promulgate regulations, in cooperation with the Department of Health, establishing standards to facilitate the prevention and reduction of childhood obesity in the public schools.
- Also required division superintendents to complete instruction concerning the causes and consequences of overweight and obese students, and the relationship between nutrition, health, and learning by July 1, 2008.



## SB 206 (Edwards) cont'd

- Senator Edwards summarized the bill as attempting to accomplish the following objectives: (1) to set statewide nutritional standards; (2) to teach children about nutrition; (3) and to increase the physical fitness opportunities for children.





# Special Subcommittee Meetings

- Lynne Fellin, Acting Director of School Nutrition Programs for the Department of Education, described the activities of the Local School divisions, the federal government, and the Governor in addressing the issue of obesity in the schools.



# Federally mandated local wellness policies

- Must include: (1) goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities to promote student wellness; (2) nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available during the school day; (3) assurance that local guidelines will not be less restrictive than USDA regulations and guidance as they apply to the school nutrition programs; and (4) a plan for measuring implementation of the local policy.
- Must be submitted by July 1, 2006.



# CHAMPION Program

- Anne Massey, of the Department of Health, spoke about the CHAMPION program sponsored by the Department and developed in response to the increasing obesity rate in Virginia.
- The goal is to develop a statewide resource guide for people who wish to become more active and who are interested in obesity prevention, along with general information about community-based programs.



# Other obesity-related initiatives

- Governor's Healthy Virginians Program - aimed specifically at creating healthy lifestyles in the workplace, school, and among families.
- Public Service Announcements for both television and radio featuring Chicago Bears running back and Virginia native Thomas Jones urging kids to get moving!
- Virginia Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program - modified to reduce the prevalence of childhood obesity.



## Local school division perspectives

- Lack of adequate lunch time, particularly in the high schools
- Balancing the nutritional needs of their students with their business survival needs
- Trouble in implementing healthier menus due to cost and lack of interest



# Funding for school nutrition programs: state and federal

- Schools are federally reimbursed at a set rate for each meal, breakfast or lunch, actually served to a child.
- The true cost of the meals is higher than the reimbursement rate.
- Schools also receive state funds; however, this is a set amount based on 1980 revenues, which has not changed in over twenty years.
- Many school divisions are forced to raise additional funds through a la carte sales, or outside catering.



# Physical education requirements

- James Firebaugh, Director of Middle and High School Instruction for the Department of Education, spoke about physical education requirements in the Commonwealth.
- The 2006 changes to the Standards of Accreditation require a physical education program for elementary and middle school students, with guidelines to be developed by the Board of Education.
- The new standards continue to require two years of physical education in high school.



## Other states' initiatives

- Limit the types of foods that can be sold in public schools (aside from the official school meal programs)
- Increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables
- Require weekly physical education
- Gather and report to parents the body mass index (BMI) of students.





# Special Subcommittee Action

- The Special Subcommittee took no action on SB 206.
- The subcommittee did endorse SJR 374 (Whipple), a resolution encouraging school divisions to strengthen their commitment to childhood obesity prevention by increasing opportunities for participation in healthy activities and emphasizing good nutrition in the public schools.
- SJR 374 was tabled in the House Rules committee



# Relevant 2007 Legislation

- HB 2214 (Armstrong)/SB 974 (Edwards): Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Health Commissioner to work together to combat childhood obesity and other chronic health conditions that affect school-age children
- The identical bills passed with minimal opposition