



Sam Brownback

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NEWS RELEASE
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BROWNBACK ADDRESSES JOINT TASK FORCE ON MEDIA AND CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Examines impact of media and advertising on children

WASHINGTON - U.S. Senator Sam Brownback today attended the first public meeting of the Joint Task Force on Media and Childhood Obesity, a public-private group dedicated to examining the impact of media and advertising on children's health.

"I am confident that the Joint Task Force will be able to accomplish its goal of working with the industry to combat the rising rates of obesity," said Brownback. "As a diverse coalition, there is more that brings us together than separates us in finding a solution to childhood obesity."

The Joint Task Force on Media and Childhood Obesity met this afternoon to examine current trends in media and the possible effects on obesity rates. According to a National Health Examination Survey, the percentage of overweight children has more than tripled over the past 40 years. American companies spend \$15 billion a year marketing and advertising to children under the age of 12, twice the amount spent 10 years ago. Children influence about \$500 billion in annual spending on products like cereal, candy and fast food.

Brownback continued, "We all must act to protect our nation's children and I am pleased to be a part of this effort. I am hopeful that the Task Force will issue a final report in the summer on recommended actions to reduce the rates of childhood obesity."

The task force participants include: American Diabetes Association, American Society for Nutrition, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Psychological Association, American Diabetes Association, Kraft Foods, Coca-Cola Company, General Mills, The Grocery Manufacturers Association, Kellogg Company, McDonald's, PepsiCo, Ion Media Networks, Viacom, Discovery Channel, Walt Disney Company, Sesame Workshop, Black Family Channel, Telemundo, The Beverly LaHaye Institute, The Benton Foundation, Children Now, Common Sense Media, The Center for Screen Time Awareness, PTA, Parents Television Council, The Ad Council, Association of National Advertisers, and the American Association of Advertising Agencies.

Brownback last year joined Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), FCC Chairman Kevin Martin and FCC Commissioners Michael J. Copps and Deborah Taylor Tate to announce the formation of a public and private task force to examine the impact of media and advertising on children's health.

Brownback is a member of the Senate Judiciary and Appropriations Committees.