

S.L.C.

108TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION  
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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. LIEBERMAN (for himself, Mr. BROWNBACK and MRS. CLINTON) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

**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 National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to study the role and impact of electronic media in the development of children.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

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

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

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

- 1) Congress has recognized the important role of electronic media in children’s lives when it passed the Children’s Television Act of 1990 and the Telecommunications Act of 1996, both of which documented public concerns about how electronic media products influence children’s development.
- 2) Congress has held hearings over the past several decades to examine the impact of specific types of media products such as violent television, movies, and video games, on children’s health and development. These hearings and other public discussions about the role of media in children’s development require behavioral and social science research to inform the policy deliberations.
- 3) There are important gaps in our knowledge about the role of electronic media and in particular, the newer interactive digital media, in children’s healthy development. The consequences of very early screen usage by babies and toddlers on children’s cognitive growth are not yet understood, nor has a research base been established on the psychological consequences of high definition interactive media and other format differences for child viewers

- 6) Studies have shown that children who primarily watch educational shows on television during their preschool years are significantly more successful in school 10 years later even when critical contributors to the child's environment are factored in, including their household income, parents' education, and intelligence.
- 7) The early stages of child development are a critical formative period. Virtually every aspect of human development is affected by the environments and experiences that one encounters during his/her early childhood years, and media exposure is an increasing part of every child's social and physical environment.
- 8) As of the late 1990s, just before the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development funded five studies on the role of sexual messages in the media on children and adolescents' sexual attitudes and sexual practices, a review of research in this area found only 15 studies ever conducted in the United States on this topic, even during a time of growing concerns about HIV-infection.
- 9) In 2001, a National Academy of Sciences study group charged with finding solutions to Internet pornography exposure on youth found virtually no literature about how much children and adolescents were exposed to Internet pornography or how such content impacts youth.
- 10) In order to develop strategies that maximize the positive and minimize the negative effects of each media on children's physical, cognitive, social and emotional development, it would be beneficial to develop a research program that can track the media habits of young children and their families over time using valid and reliable research methods.
- 11) Research about the impact of the media on children is not presently supported through one primary programmatic effort; the responsibility for directing the research is distributed across disparate agencies in an uncoordinated fashion, or is over-looked entirely. The lack of any centralized organization for research minimizes the value of the knowledge produced by individual studies. A more productive approach for generating valuable findings about the impact of the media on children would be to establish a single, well-coordinated research effort with primary responsibility for directing the research agenda.
- 12) Due to the paucity of research about electronic media, educators and others interested in implementing electronic media literacy initiatives do not have the evidence needed to design, implement, or assess the value of these efforts.

(b) PURPOSES.—It is the purpose of this Act to—

(1) Enable the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to—

(A) Examine the role and impact of electronic media in children's cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and behavioral development; and

(B) Provide for a report to Congress containing the empirical evidence and other results produced by the research funded through grants under this Act.

**SEC. 3. RESEARCH ON THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN.**

Subpart 7 of part C of title IV of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 285g et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

**“SEC. 452H. RESEARCH ON THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN.**

“(a) IN GENERAL. —The Director of the Institute shall enter into appropriate arrangements with the National Academy of Science in collaboration with the Institute of Medicine to establish an independent panel of experts to review and synthesize research, theory, and applications in the social, behavioral, and biological sciences and to establish research priorities regarding the positive and negative roles and impact of electronic media use, including television, motion pictures, DVD’s, interactive video games, and the Internet, and exposure to that content and medium on youth in the following core areas of child development:

- 1) Cognitive- The role and impact of media use and exposure in the development of children within such cognitive areas as language development, attention span, problem-solving skills (such as the ability to conduct multiple tasks. or “multi-task”), visual and spatial skills, reading, and other learning abilities.
- 2) Physical- The role and impact of media use and exposure on children’s physical coordination, diet, exercise, sleeping and eating routines, and other areas of physical development.
- 3) Socio-behavioral- The influence of interactive media on childhood and family activities and peer relationships, including indoor and outdoor play time, interaction with parents, consumption habits, social relationships, aggression, prosocial behavior, and other patterns of development.

(b) As the National Academy panel is summarizing the data and creating a comprehensive research agenda in the children and media area, initial pilot projects will simultaneously be conducted during year 1 to supplement and inform their work. These pilot projects will take place on the role of media exposure on: 1) cognitive and social development during infancy and early childhood; and 2) the development of childhood obesity, particularly as a function of media advertising and sedentary life styles that may co-occur with heavy media diets.

(c) Upon completion of the Academy study, NICHD will develop a program that funds additional research determined to be necessary by the Academy study about the role and impact of electronic media in the cognitive, physical and socio-behavioral development with a particular focus on the impact of factors such as media content, format, length of exposure, age of child, and nature of parental involvement. The Institute's research program will include extramural and intramural research and will support collaborative efforts to link this research to other NIH research investigations on early child health and development.

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

“(1) prepare and submit to the Director of the Institute an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Director may require; and

“(2) agree to use amounts received under the grant to carry out activities that establish or implement a research program relating to the effects of media on children pursuant to guidelines developed by the Director relating to consultations with experts in the area of study.

“(e) USE OF FUNDS RELATING TO THE MEDIA'S ROLE IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD.—An entity shall use amounts received under a grant under this section to conduct research concerning the social, cognitive, emotional, physical, and behavioral development of children as related to electronic mass media, including the areas of—

“(1) television;

“(2) motion pictures;

“(3) DVD's;

“(4) interactive video games; and

“(5) the Internet.

“(e) REPORTS. —

“(1) REPORT TO DIRECTOR.—The report of the National Academies study will be provided to the Director of the Institute, in consultation with experts in the field of children and the media, 12 months after the enactment of this legislation.

“(2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than December 31, 2010, the Director of the Institute shall prepare and submit to Congress, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, and House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce a report that—

“(A) Summarizes the empirical evidence and other results produced by the research under this section in a manner that can be understood by the general public;

“(B) Places the evidence in context with other evidence and knowledge generated by the scientific community that address the same or related topics; and

“(C) Discusses the implications of the collective body of scientific evidence and knowledge regarding the role and impact of the media on children, and makes recommendations on how scientific evidence and knowledge may be used to improve the healthy developmental and learning capacities of children.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section—

- “(1) \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2004;
- “(2) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2005;
- “(3) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2006;
- “(4) \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2007;
- “(5) \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2008.’