

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. LIEBERMAN (for himself, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. SANTORUM, and Ms. LANDRIEU) 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.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

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

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

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
8 ings:

1 (1) Congress has recognized the important role
2 of electronic media in children's lives when it passed
3 the Children's Television Act of 1990 (Public Law
4 101-437) and the Telecommunications Act of 1996
5 (Public Law 104-104), both of which documented
6 public concerns about how electronic media products
7 influence children's development.

8 (2) Congress has held hearings over the past
9 several decades to examine the impact of specific
10 types of media products such as violent television,
11 movies, and video games on children's health and de-
12 velopment. These hearings and other public discus-
13 sions about the role of media in children's develop-
14 ment require behavioral and social science research
15 to inform the policy deliberations.

16 (3) There are important gaps in our knowledge
17 about the role of electronic media and in particular,
18 the newer interactive digital media, in children's
19 healthy development. The consequences of very early
20 screen usage by babies and toddlers on children's
21 cognitive growth are not yet understood, nor has a
22 research base been established on the psychological
23 consequences of high definition interactive media
24 and other format differences for child viewers.

1 (4) Studies have shown that children who pri-
2 marily watch educational shows on television during
3 their preschool years are significantly more success-
4 ful in school 10 years later even when critical con-
5 tributors to the child's environment are factored in,
6 including their household income, parents education,
7 and intelligence.

8 (5) The early stages of child development are a
9 critical formative period. Virtually every aspect of
10 human development is affected by the environments
11 and experiences that one encounters during his or
12 her early childhood years, and media exposure is an
13 increasing part of every child's social and physical
14 environment.

15 (6) As of the late 1990's, just before the Na-
16 tional Institute of Child Health and Human Devel-
17 opment funded 5 studies on the role of sexual mes-
18 sages in the media on children and adolescents sex-
19 ual attitudes and sexual practices, a review of re-
20 search in this area found only 15 studies ever con-
21 ducted in the United States on this topic, even dur-
22 ing a time of growing concerns about HIV infection.

23 (7) In 2001, a National Academy of Sciences
24 study group charged with finding solutions to Inter-
25 net pornography exposure on youth found virtually

1 no literature about how much children and adoles-
2 cents were exposed to Internet pornography or how
3 such content impacts youth.

4 (8) In order to develop strategies that maximize
5 the positive and minimize the negative effects of
6 each medium on children's physical, cognitive, social,
7 and emotional development, it would be beneficial to
8 develop a research program that can track the media
9 habits of young children and their families over time
10 using valid and reliable research methods.

11 (9) Research about the impact of the media on
12 children is not presently supported through one pri-
13 mary programmatic effort. The responsibility for di-
14 recting the research is distributed across disparate
15 agencies in an uncoordinated fashion, or is over-
16 looked entirely. The lack of any centralized organiza-
17 tion for research minimizes the value of the knowl-
18 edge produced by individual studies. A more produc-
19 tive approach for generating valuable findings about
20 the impact of the media on children would be to es-
21 tablish a single, well-coordinated research effort with
22 primary responsibility for directing the research
23 agenda.

24 (10) Due to the paucity of research about elec-
25 tronic media, educators and others interested in im-

1 plementing electronic media literacy initiatives do
2 not have the evidence needed to design, implement,
3 or assess the value of these efforts.

4 (b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act to enable
5 the National Institute of Child Health and Human Devel-
6 opment to—

7 (1) examine the role and impact of electronic
8 media in children’s cognitive, social, emotional, phys-
9 ical, and behavioral development; and

10 (2) provide for a report to Congress containing
11 the empirical evidence and other results produced by
12 the research funded through grants under this Act.

13 **SEC. 3. RESEARCH ON THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF ELEC-**
14 **TRONIC MEDIA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF**
15 **CHILDREN.**

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

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

22 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Institute
23 shall enter into appropriate arrangements with the Na-
24 tional Academy of Science in collaboration with the Insti-
25 tute of Medicine to establish an independent panel of ex-

1 perts to review, synthesize and report on research, theory,
2 and applications in the social, behavioral, and biological
3 sciences and to establish research priorities regarding the
4 positive and negative roles and impact of electronic media
5 use, including television, motion pictures, DVD's, inter-
6 active video games, and the Internet, and exposure to that
7 content and medium on youth in the following core areas
8 of child development:

9 “(1) COGNITIVE.—The role and impact of
10 media use and exposure in the development of chil-
11 dren within such cognitive areas as language devel-
12 opment, attention span, problem solving skills (such
13 as the ability to conduct multiple tasks or
14 ‘multitask’), visual and spatial skills, reading, and
15 other learning abilities.

16 “(2) PHYSICAL.—The role and impact of media
17 use and exposure on children’s physical coordination,
18 diet, exercise, sleeping and eating routines, and
19 other areas of physical development.

20 “(3) SOCIO-BEHAVIORAL.—The influence of
21 interactive media on childhood and family activities
22 and peer relationships, including indoor and outdoor
23 play time, interaction with parents, consumption
24 habits, social relationships, aggression, prosocial be-
25 havior, and other patterns of development.

1 “(b) PILOT PROJECTS.—During the first year in
2 which the National Academy of Sciences panel is summa-
3 rizing the data and creating a comprehensive research
4 agenda in the children and media area under subsection
5 (a), the Secretary shall provide for the conduct of initial
6 pilot projects to supplement and inform the panel in its
7 work. Such pilot projects shall consider the role of media
8 exposure on—

9 “(1) cognitive and social development during in-
10 fancy and early childhood; and

11 “(2) the development of childhood obesity, par-
12 ticularly as a function of media advertising and sed-
13 entary lifestyles that may co-occur with heavy media
14 diets.

15 “(c) RESEARCH PROGRAM.—Upon completion of the
16 review under subsection (a), the Director of the National
17 Institute of Child Health and Human Development shall
18 develop and implement a program that funds additional
19 research determined to be necessary by the panel under
20 subsection (a) concerning the role and impact of electronic
21 media in the cognitive, physical, and socio-behavioral de-
22 velopment of children with a particular focus on the im-
23 pact of factors such as media content, format, length of
24 exposure, age of child, and nature of parental involvement.
25 Such program shall include extramural and intramural re-

1 search and shall support collaborative efforts to link such
2 research to other National Institutes of Health research
3 investigations on early child health and development.

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

6 “(1) prepare and submit to the Director of the
7 Institute an application at such time, in such man-
8 ner, and containing such information as the Director
9 may require; and

10 “(2) agree to use amounts received under the
11 grant to carry out activities that establish or imple-
12 ment a research program relating to the effects of
13 media on children pursuant to guidelines developed
14 by the Director relating to consultations with ex-
15 perts in the area of study.

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

22 “(1) television;

23 “(2) motion pictures;

24 “(3) DVD’s;

25 “(4) interactive video games; and

1 “(5) the Internet.

2 “(f) REPORTS.—

3 “(1) REPORT TO DIRECTOR.—Not later than 12
4 months after the date of enactment of this section,
5 the panel under subsection (a) shall submit the re-
6 port required under such subsection to the Director
7 of the Institute.

8 “(2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than
9 December 31, 2010, the Director of the Institute
10 shall prepare and submit to the Committee on
11 Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Sen-
12 ate, and Committee on Education and the Workforce
13 of the House of Representatives a report that—

14 “(A) summarizes the empirical evidence
15 and other results produced by the research
16 under this section in a manner that can be un-
17 derstood by the general public;

18 “(B) places the evidence in context with
19 other evidence and knowledge generated by the
20 scientific community that address the same or
21 related topics; and

22 “(C) discusses the implications of the col-
23 lective body of scientific evidence and knowledge
24 regarding the role and impact of the media on
25 children, and makes recommendations on how

1 scientific evidence and knowledge may be used
2 to improve the healthy developmental and learn-
3 ing capacities of children.

4 “(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
5 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this
6 section—

7 “(1) \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2005;

8 “(2) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2006;

9 “(3) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2007;

10 “(4) \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2008; and

11 “(5) \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2009.”.