

STATE SENATOR • DEBORAH CHERRY • 26TH DISTRICT

Cherry Press Release

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New Children's Health Report Underscores Senator Cherry's Legislation to Curb Childhood Obesity

Mandatory School Fitness Would Counteract Unhealthy Habits

LANSING—State Senator Deb Cherry (D-Burton) renewed her call for action today on her legislation to mandate physical fitness in schools after the release of the 2007 Kids Count in Michigan report this week on the health of Michigan children. Her legislation, Senate Bill 125, would require 30 minutes of daily physical activity for all elementary school students in Michigan to combat obesity and unhealthy habits. It was introduced on January 31, 2007 and assigned to the Senate Education Committee, where it has sat idle ever since under the Republican Majority.

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and that definitely applies to childhood obesity as it leads to more severe diseases and medical concerns in adulthood,” Sen. Cherry said. “My legislation would make sure every child in every school in Michigan is getting outside or exercising for 30 minutes every day and establishing a healthy lifestyle.”

The 2007 Kids Count in Michigan report examines 18 wide-ranging health goals for children and teens that are set by the Healthy People (HP) 2010, a national initiative to advance health and well-being. The report determined that Michigan is making progress, but it is not fast enough to meet the goals in many areas. Unless Michigan acts more decisively in the next few years, the state will fail to meet many national standards for healthy children, families and neighborhoods.

Four areas where the state experienced worsening rates included low birth weight infants, child abuse or neglect, overweight high school students, and a companion problem of too few youth exercising vigorously on a regular basis. An increasingly inactive lifestyle, with physical activity replaced by high-tech, low-impact entertainment like playing video games, watching television, and surfing the internet, are leading to skyrocketing obesity rates in both adults and children. Paired with poor eating habits, kids are becoming significantly more overweight and out of shape compared to previous generations.

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Elected to the Senate in 2002 and 2006, Senator Cherry is a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, serving as Minority Vice Chair on the Subcommittees for Community Health and Retirement. She is also a member of the Subcommittee on Capital Outlay.