

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1978

To direct the Secretary of Defense to develop a strategy to treat obesity as a disease and reduce the prevalence of obesity in certain Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 10, 2025

Mr. BUCHANAN (for himself and Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Defense to develop a strategy to treat obesity as a disease and reduce the prevalence of obesity in certain Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

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. COMBATING OBESITY IN CERTAIN ARMED**
4 **FORCES.**

5 (a) STRATEGY AND EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
7 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
8 retary of Defense shall—

1 (A) develop a strategy to align the obesity-
2 related programs of the Department of Defense
3 with the classification of obesity as a medically
4 accepted disease; and

5 (B) conduct an educational campaign to
6 promote awareness, diagnosis, and treatment of
7 obesity as a disease in the covered Armed
8 Forces.

9 (2) REQUIREMENTS FOR STRATEGY.—The
10 strategy developed under paragraph (1)(A) shall in-
11 clude the following:

12 (A) A plan to coordinate obesity-related
13 programs across the Department of Defense to
14 treat obesity as a disease and reduce the preva-
15 lence of obesity in the covered Armed Forces.

16 (B) An assessment of the effectiveness of
17 health programs of the Department of Defense
18 that are intended to educate, prevent, or treat
19 obesity among members of the covered Armed
20 Forces, and a plan to modify or update such
21 programs to treat obesity as a disease.

22 (C) An assessment of the adequacy of nu-
23 trition education for physicians and other
24 health care practitioners in the military health
25 system to evaluate and treat obesity as a dis-

1 ease, including the need for any additional edu-
2 cation or guidelines for such physicians and
3 other health care practitioners.

4 (D) A strategy to work toward members of
5 the covered Armed Forces with obesity receiving
6 appropriate treatment.

7 (3) REQUIREMENTS FOR EDUCATIONAL CAM-
8 PAIGN.—The educational campaign conducted under
9 paragraph (1)(B) shall include the following:

10 (A) Information to educate members of the
11 covered Armed Forces regarding best practices
12 to prevent, reduce, or mitigate obesity, and
13 available resources to address the root causes of
14 obesity.

15 (B) Information targeted to physicians and
16 other health care practitioners in the military
17 health system to promote diagnosis and treat-
18 ment of obesity as a disease.

19 (4) CONSULTATION.—In developing the strat-
20 egy and educational campaign required by para-
21 graph (1), the Secretary of Defense shall consult
22 with the Secretary of Health and Human Services,
23 acting through the Administrator of the Centers for
24 Medicare & Medicaid Services, and other agencies of
25 the Department of Health and Human Services, as

1 determined appropriate by the Secretary of Health
2 and Human Services.

3 (b) INCLUSION OF INFORMATION REGARDING
4 UNMET WEIGHT STANDARDS IN CERTAIN REPORTS.—
5 Beginning not later than one year after the date of the
6 enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall in-
7 clude information regarding unmet weight standards in
8 any report submitted by the Secretary to Congress regard-
9 ing disqualifications for enlistment in, disability incurred
10 in, or medical discharges from, the covered Armed Forces.

11 (c) ADDITIONAL DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE RE-
12 PORTS.—

13 (1) EFFECTS OF OBESITY ON READINESS OF
14 COVERED ARMED FORCES.—Not later than one year
15 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
16 retary of Defense, in consultation with the Adminis-
17 trator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Serv-
18 ices, shall submit to the appropriate congressional
19 committees a report regarding the effects of obesity
20 on the readiness of the covered Armed Forces. Such
21 report shall include legislative recommendations of
22 the Secretary to address such effects.

23 (2) EFFECTIVENESS OF OBESITY, FOOD, AND
24 NUTRITION-RELATED PROGRAMS OF DEPARTMENT
25 OF DEFENSE.—Not later than one year after the

1 date of the enactment of this Act, and annually
2 thereafter, the Director of the Defense Health Agen-
3 cy shall submit to the appropriate congressional
4 committees a report on the effectiveness of the obe-
5 sity, food, and nutrition-related programs of the De-
6 partment of Defense in reducing obesity and improv-
7 ing military readiness.

8 (d) GAO REPORT.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
10 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
11 Comptroller General of the United States shall sub-
12 mit to the appropriate congressional committees a
13 report analyzing the existing obesity, food, and nu-
14 trition-related programs of the Department of De-
15 fense.

16 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—The report required by
17 paragraph (1) shall include the following:

18 (A) An assessment of programs directed to
19 members of the covered Armed Forces.

20 (B) An assessment of programs directed to
21 health care providers in the military health sys-
22 tem.

23 (C) An assessment of the effectiveness of
24 such programs in reducing obesity and the im-
25 pact of obesity on military readiness.

1 (D) Recommendations to coordinate and
2 improve existing programs to reduce obesity
3 and the impact of obesity on military readiness.

4 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

5 (1) The term “appropriate congressional com-
6 mittees” means the following:

7 (A) The Committee on Armed Services of
8 the House of Representatives.

9 (B) The Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of
10 the House of Representatives.

11 (C) The Committee on Ways and Means of
12 the House of Representatives.

13 (D) The Committee on Energy and Com-
14 merce of the House of Representatives.

15 (E) The Committee on Armed Services of
16 the Senate.

17 (F) The Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of
18 the Senate.

19 (G) The Committee on Finance of the Sen-
20 ate.

21 (H) The Committee on Health, Education,
22 Labor, and Pensions of the Senate.

1 (2) The term “covered Armed Force” means
2 the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Space
3 Force.

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