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Dear Business and Labor Committee:

On behalf of the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) and our more than 12,000 members, I urge you to please support SB 552 sponsored by Sen. Rodger Smitherman. This legislation is essential in ensuring children in the state of Alabama receive the appropriate amount of physical education throughout their school years.

The requirement of not allowing children to substitute their general physical education classes already exists; however, SB 552 will ensure the enforcement of the requirement in the form of a law to promote a proactive quality of health and life for the children of Alabama.

Childhood obesity is a growing epidemic in the United States affecting more than 30 percent of children -- making it the most common chronic disease of childhood. This number has more than tripled since 1980 and it is not just a cosmetic problem. Today, more and more children are being diagnosed with diabetes, hypertension and other co-morbid conditions associated with obesity and morbid obesity. Children who are considered obese are 70 percent more likely to continue being obese into adulthood. In addition, they are at greater risk for serious medical issues such as heart disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, sleep apnea and cancer – conditions that will only worsen should they carry their obesity into their adult lives. As with all subject material taught in education, the importance and validity of physical education will become more valuable to the children of Alabama later in life by providing them with the foundation to make educated decisions regarding their health. Having the children of Alabama take part in physical education has the potential of building their interest in physical activities (at the lower education level) while allowing them to assess themselves and their physical fitness level (at the higher education level).

Your support of this legislation is critical as its passage will greatly benefit the lives of many future generations of your constituents. Please do not hesitate to contact me if the OAC can be of any assistance in passing this important legislation or on any other obesity-related issues. I can be reached via phone at (800) 717-3117 or e-mail at jnadglowski@obesityaction.org. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Nadglowski".

Joseph Nadglowski Jr.
President & CEO

About the OAC

The OAC is a non-profit patient organization dedicated to educating and advocating on behalf of those affected by obesity, morbid obesity and childhood obesity. Founded in 2005, the OAC was created to address the obesity epidemic and its devastating impact on the quality of health, quality of life and socioeconomic status of those impacted as well as its significant impact on society. Started after a legislator pointed out that he was often asked to address the obesity epidemic but rarely heard from those affected by obesity themselves, the OAC's focus is unique as we represent the views and interests of the nearly 1/3 of all Americans who are personally affected by obesity. Based in Tampa, Fla., the OAC is a national organization consisting of members in all 50 states.