

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I call for a vote on this by voice.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the amendment? If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 1773) was rejected.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time between now and 7 o'clock be evenly divided between myself and Senator BINGAMAN from New Mexico, with the vote on the Coburn amendment No. 1775 to occur at 7 o'clock to be followed by a vote on the Bingham amendment, with the yeas and nays ordered in both instances with no other amendments being allowed to either amendment prior to the time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

It shall be in order to order the yeas and nays on any amendment at this time.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I call for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I renew my request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair states that at 7 o'clock a rollcall vote will occur on the Coburn amendment, followed by a vote on the Bingham amendment, with the time between now and then evenly divided between the Senator from Utah and the Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that between the two votes there be a period of 2 minutes for explanation equally divided between the Senator from New Mexico and myself.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from New Mexico is recognized for 10 minutes.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. President. And I thank my colleague from Utah for his courtesy.

AMENDMENT NO. 1797

Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the pending amendments are set aside.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Mexico [Mr. BINGAMAN], for himself and Mr. LUGAR, proposes an amendment numbered 1797.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

On page 85, line 15, strike "\$128,072,000" and insert "\$118,072,000".

On page 132, line 24, strike "\$12,412,027,000" and insert "\$12,422,027,000".

On page 132, line 26, strike "\$7,224,406,000" and insert "\$7,234,406,000".

On page 133, line 6, before the period, insert the following: "Provided further, That not less than \$20,025,000 shall be available to implement and administer Team Nutrition programs of the Department of Agriculture".

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, this amendment I described earlier today, but let me describe it briefly again because it is very straightforward.

Each year, when the administration sends the Congress its budget request for the Department of Agriculture, it asks for \$10 million for nutrition education. It is the Team Nutrition programs sponsored by the Department of Agriculture. This is funding that goes to 21 States to try to assist them in providing nutrition education in the schools. The other 29 States get no funds. My State gets no funds because there is not enough being appropriated. This program cannot cover more than the 21 States that are currently covered. So the children in my State do not get the benefit of this nutrition activity.

Why is nutrition education an important issue for this Congress and this country at this time in our history? I would suggest that the best case for explaining that is set out in this letter which I received from the American Heart Association endorsing the amendment that I am offering on behalf of myself and Senator LUGAR. Senator LUGAR is the cosponsor of my amendment.

I ask unanimous consent that this letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION,  
AMERICAN STROKE ASSOCIATION,  
September 21, 2005.

DEAR SENATOR BINGAMAN: On behalf of the American Heart Association and its division, the American Stroke Association, I am pleased to offer our support for legislation that would expand funding for Team Nutrition. This program provides funding to states to support nutrition education and promote physical activity in schools. The current funding level of \$10 million provides support to only 21 States. The additional funding would be used to expand the program so that more young people could obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy lifestyle choices.

Overweight and obesity, especially among children, have emerged as serious threats to our nation's health. Today, about 16 percent of all children and teens in the United States are overweight. Obesity is a major risk factor for coronary heart disease, which can lead to heart attack. Obesity can also induce diabetes, which makes the danger of heart attack especially high. Recent research suggests that obesity shortens the average lifespan by at least four to nine months, and if childhood obesity continues to increase, it could cut two to five years from the average lifespan. This could cause our current generation of children to become the first in American history to live shorter lives than their parents. Besides its toll on health, obesity contributes significantly to rising health care costs. The World Bank has estimated the cost of obesity at 12 percent of the nation's healthcare budget.

The American Heart Association is committed to lowering rates of overweight and obesity in the United States by helping

Americans make better nutrition choices and by facilitating increased levels of physical activity at all ages. We support program and activities like those in your amendment, that can help reduce rates of obesity, cardiovascular disease and stroke. We commend you for your leadership on this issue and look forward to working with you to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

SUE A. NELSON,

Vice President Federal Advocacy.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I will read parts of this letter so people can understand the case that is being made.

The American Heart Association letter directed to me, signed by Sue Nelson, Vice President for Federal Advocacy, says:

Overweight and obesity, especially among children, have merged as serious threats to our Nation's health. Today, about 16 percent of all children and teens in the United States are overweight. Obesity is the major risk factor for coronary heart disease which can lead to heart attack. Obesity can induce diabetes which makes the danger of heart attack especially high. Recent research suggests that obesity shortens the average lifespan by at least 4 to 9 months, and if childhood obesity continues to increase it could cut 2 to 5 years from the average lifespan. It could cause our current generation of children to be the first in American history to live shorter lives than their parents. Besides its toll on health, obesity contributes significantly to rising health care costs.

The World Bank has estimated that the cost of obesity is 12 percent of this country's overall health care budget.

The problem is we don't seem to be willing to connect the dots. We don't seem to be willing to say if we spent a little more on something like nutrition education, maybe we would not have to spend 12 percent of our health care budget to deal with the problem of obesity. That is the simple reality.

All I am saying is, let's begin to connect the dots and put a reasonable amount of funding into the effort to provide instruction to children in our schools about how to eat a decent diet and maintain a decent body weight. That is the entire purpose of the amendment.

We used to appropriate more money for nutrition education than we do today. Unfortunately, the last 3 years we have fallen into an automatic \$10 million a year. That means no new States can participate in the program. It means no new students can get the benefit of this instruction. To my mind that is not an acceptable circumstance, particularly with this change in the lifestyle of Americans which we see all around us.

We need to provide good information to our young people so they can grow up and lead healthy productive lives. We are not doing that today. When you look around other parts of the Federal budget and say, well, okay, maybe the Department of Agriculture is not providing help with this, but maybe the Department of Education is. They are not. This is the only effort being made by the Federal Government to assist.

We have a lot of lofty statements being made by the administration. I