



Date: January 30, 2008

Bill: House Bill 1422, relative to establishing a commission on the prevention of childhood obesity

Speaker: Destie Hohman Sprague, of the Children's Alliance of NH, in support

Dear Madame Chair Rosenwald, and members of the Committee,

Many of you may know the Children's Alliance through our work on Kids Count NH, a unique source of comprehensive data covering all aspects of the health and wellbeing on NH families and children. The Children's Alliance also staffs the New Hampshire Child Advocacy Network (NH CAN), a coalition of over 100 child-serving organizations, state agencies, and legislators, a project I am honored to coordinate.

Research has established the critical link between healthy childhood living and eating habits to lifelong good health. Childhood obesity is a major corollary to a host of chronic diseases, and the number of obese children in New Hampshire is on the rise: currently over 53,000 NH children are obese- as many as all the k-8 kids in Merrimack, Cheshire, Grafton, Carroll, and Coos counties.

We know that this is a problem. We also know that there are many solutions. House Bill 1422 helps us take the next step toward targeting the solutions that are right for New Hampshire. A task force with broad collective experience and understanding of the issues can take a comprehensive look at the challenges facing our state, and strategize on community and state based answers to ensure a healthy future for our children.

Each year, the New Hampshire Child Advocacy Network presents the annual *Priorities for New Hampshire's Children*, a package of recommendations for our state's children and families which is developed over 3 months through a lengthy vetting process. The member organizations of the NH CAN are in the trenches every day serving New Hampshire's communities, and this year, the Network voted not just to support community-based solutions to childhood obesity, but to elevate the issue to the highest priority status.

Our coalition has joined efforts around this important issue, and we are anxious to be a part of solutions from our neighborhoods to the statewide level. We believe that this commission is integral to that goal.

Over 100 partner organizations stand with me today in respectfully requesting that you support New Hampshire children and families by supporting House Bill 1422.

Sincerely,

Destie Hohman Sprague