

June 12, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we would like to express our strong support for the upcoming 2008 Walk from Obesity – Walk on the Capitol, which will be held on the National Mall on June 17. The Walk on the Capitol is a history-making event bringing together individuals who are affected by obesity to walk and raise awareness and National attention regarding obesity and its health and quality of life impact – both in, and on, our society.

Obesity is a serious health epidemic that targets one in three Americans. It is estimated that more than 93 million Americans are obese, with that number predicted to climb to 120 million in the next five years. Obesity is a condition characterized by excessive body fat, defined by genetic and environmental factors that are difficult to control with dieting. People suffering from obesity are at an increased risk for a number of serious health conditions that alone, or in combination, significantly reduce life expectancy, including: type 2 diabetes; heart disease; cancer; osteoarthritis; respiratory problems; and depression.

Of particular concern is the growing epidemic of childhood obesity in the United States. Childhood obesity affects more than 30 percent of children, making it the most common chronic disease of childhood. This number has more than tripled since 1980. It is also important to note that childhood obesity 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.

We appreciate the efforts of both you and the first lady on this critical issue and applaud the Department of Health and Human Services' new Childhood Overweight and Obesity Prevention Initiative, which targets obesity prevention and the promotion of healthy weight for children. As you complete your second term in the White House, we hope you continue to strongly support prevention, research, and education efforts for all those affected by obesity.

Sincerely,

Obesity Action Coalition  
American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery  
American College of Cardiology  
American Medical Association  
American Osteopathic Association  
American College of Surgeons  
American Academy of Family Physicians