

111TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 4925

To authorize grants to promote media literacy and youth empowerment programs, to authorize research on the role and impact of depictions of girls and women in the media, to provide for the establishment of a National Task Force on Girls and Women in the Media, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 24, 2010

Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mrs. CAPPS, and Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To authorize grants to promote media literacy and youth empowerment programs, to authorize research on the role and impact of depictions of girls and women in the media, to provide for the establishment of a National Task Force on Girls and Women in the Media, 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. SHORT TITLE.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Healthy Media for Youth Act”.

1 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of
2 this Act is as follows:

- 3 Sec. 1. Short title.
- 4 Sec. 2. Findings.
- 5 Sec. 3. Grants to promote media literacy and youth empowerment programs.
- 6 Sec. 4. Research on the role and impact of girls and women in the media on
7 youths' development.
- 8 Sec. 5. National Task Force on Girls and Women in the Media.
- 9 Sec. 6. Limitation.
- 10 Sec. 7. Definitions.
- 11 Sec. 8. Authorization of appropriations.

12 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

13 Congress finds the following:

14 (1) Media has become an integral part of
15 youths' lives. According to the Kaiser Family Foun-
16 dation Study, Generation M² Media in Lives of 8-
17 to 18-Year-Olds (2010), most 8- to 18-year-olds
18 spend about 10 hours a day using just recreational
19 media.

20 (2) Girls feel pressure from the mainstream
media to have an ideal body type, and only 34 per-
cent of girls report being very satisfied with their
bodies, according to the Girl Scout Research Insti-
tute's, The New Normal? What Girls Say About
Healthy Living (2006).

(3) Sixty percent of teenage girls compare their
bodies to fashion models and almost 90 percent of
girls say the fashion industry places a lot of pressure
on teenage girls to be thin, according to the Girl

1 Scout Research Institute survey, *Girls and Body*
2 *Image* (2010).

3 (4) This same research finds that body dis-
4 satisfaction leads to unhealthy eating and dieting
5 habits. More than half of girls (55 percent) admit
6 they diet to lose weight, 42 percent of girls know
7 someone their age who forced themselves to throw
8 up after eating, 37 percent know someone who has
9 been diagnosed with an eating disorder, and 31 per-
10 cent admit to starving themselves or refusing to eat
11 as a strategy to lose weight.

12 (5) Even young girls, 3rd through 5th grade,
13 worry about their appearance (54 percent), and spe-
14 cifically their weight (37 percent) according to the
15 *Girls Inc. survey, The Supergirl Dilemma: Girls*
16 *Grapple with the Mounting Pressure of Expectations*
17 (2006).

18 (6) The American Psychological Association's
19 *Report on the Sexualization of Girls* (2007) found
20 that three of the most common mental health prob-
21 lems among girls, eating disorders, depression or de-
22 pressed mood, and low self-esteem, are linked to
23 sexualization of girls and women in media.

24 (7) According to the same report, frequent ex-
25 posure to sexualized media images of girls can have

1 negative consequences on their sexual health and
2 avoidance of sexual risk including the dangerous,
3 new phenomena known as sexting, which means
4 sending an explicit message or photo over a cell
5 phone.

6 (8) The group AK Teens found that 30 percent
7 of girls ages 9 to 15 have sent a sext. The Campaign
8 to Prevent Teen Pregnancy found that 20 percent of
9 youth ages 13 to 19 have texted partially or com-
10 pletely nude pictures of themselves or someone they
11 knew.

12 (9) Competition over narrow beauty standards
13 and attention from boys also damages girls' friend-
14 ships, according to the American Psychological Asso-
15 ciation report. Damaging girls' friendships can have
16 serious health consequences since their relationships
17 are crucial to their social and emotional health, ac-
18 cording to *The New Normal? What Girls Say About*
19 *Healthy Living* (2006).

20 (10) Sexualized messages and images of girls
21 and women also negatively impact boys. These nega-
22 tive effects include boys' developing unrealistic and
23 unhealthy expectations of girls' and women's phys-
24 ical appearance, and may impair their ability to de-
25 velop healthy relationships with girls and women, ac-

1 cording to the American Psychological Association's
2 report.

3 (11) Girls and women of color are dispro-
4 tionately absent from mainstream media. The Girl
5 Scout Research Institute survey, Girls and Body
6 Image (2010), found that only 32 percent of Afri-
7 can-American girls think the fashion industry does a
8 good job of representing people of all races and
9 ethnicities.

10 (12) Women and girls continue to be underrep-
11 resented in leadership roles in the media. Geena
12 Davis Institute on Gender in the Media reports that
13 less than one in three speaking characters in chil-
14 dren's movies are female. One study found that only
15 10 percent of Sports Illustrated photographs were of
16 women during a 3-year period, according to the
17 American Psychological Association's Report on the
18 Sexualization of Girls (2007). Fifty-seven percent of
19 music videos feature a woman portrayed exclusively
20 as a decorative, sexual object.

21 (13) The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in
22 the Media found that the majority of female char-
23 acters in children's movies are praised for their ap-
24 pearance or physical beauty rather than their per-
25 sonality, intelligence, or other talents, and are often

1 short-sighted and narrowly fixated on romantic rela-
2 tionships that lack substantial connections or court-
3 ships. Girls and boys watching children's program-
4 ming may vicariously learn that beauty is an essen-
5 tial part of being female and critical for gaining at-
6 tention and acceptance.

7 (14) Girls' aspirations are limited as they begin
8 to associate power, acceptance, and success with
9 physical appearance rather than academic or extra-
10 curricular achievements, according to the American
11 Psychological Association.

12 (15) Violence against women continues to be
13 prevalent throughout media. The Parents Television
14 Council reports that between 2004 and 2009, vio-
15 lence against women and teenage girls has increased
16 on television programming at a rate of 120 percent
17 compared to the 2 percent increase of overall vio-
18 lence in television content.

19 (16) The Parents Television Council warns that
20 by depicting violence against women with increasing
21 frequency on television, or as a trivial, even humor-
22 ous matter, these images may be contributing to an
23 atmosphere in which young people view aggression
24 and violence against women as normative, even ac-
25 ceptable.

1 (17) Due to the alarming side effects of youths'
2 exposure to negative messages about girls and
3 women in media, Congress supports efforts to ensure
4 youth improve their media literacy skills and con-
5 sume positive messages about girls and women in
6 the media that promotes healthy and diverse body
7 images, develops positive and active female role mod-
8 els, and portrays equal and healthy relationships be-
9 tween female and male characters.

10 **SEC. 3. GRANTS TO PROMOTE MEDIA LITERACY AND**
11 **YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS.**

12 (a) MEDIA LITERACY.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award
14 grants to nonprofit organizations to provide for the
15 establishment, operation, coordination, and evalua-
16 tion of programs to increase the media literacy of
17 girls and boys, including by—

18 (A) educating youth on how to apply their
19 critical thinking skills when consuming media
20 images and messages;

21 (B) promoting healthy, balanced, and posi-
22 tive media depictions of girls and women among
23 youth; and

24 (C) countering the perpetuation and dam-
25 aging effects of narrow, restrictive gender roles,

1 stereotypes, and expectations, including the
2 sexualization of female children, adolescents,
3 and adults.

4 (2) ACTIVITIES.—Programs funded under this
5 subsection may include—

6 (A) education on analytical skills that pro-
7 mote autonomy and critical understanding of
8 how girls and women are depicted in the media;

9 (B) age-appropriate education about nega-
10 tive effects of the sexualization of female chil-
11 dren, adolescents, and adults;

12 (C) education about how traditional, re-
13 strictive gender roles can be perpetuated
14 through media;

15 (D) education about how depictions of girls
16 and women in the media can negatively affect
17 youths' body image, their choice of role models,
18 relationships among girls, and relationships and
19 expectations between girls and boys;

20 (E) education on how to use media to posi-
21 tively influence others and to affect healthier
22 cultural norms and practices;

23 (F) education of parents, educators, and
24 other adults on how depictions of girls and
25 women in the media impact youth; or

1 (G) support for public or private partner-
2 ships that encourage businesses, advertisers,
3 the entertainment industry, and other media
4 content providers to promote media content
5 that—

6 (i) encourages healthy body images;

7 (ii) develops positive and active female
8 role models; and

9 (iii) portrays equal and healthy rela-
10 tionships between female and male char-
11 acters.

12 (3) REPORT.—The Secretary shall require each
13 grant recipient under this subsection to submit to
14 the Secretary a report for each grant period that—

15 (A) describes how grant funds were used;

16 and

17 (B) evaluates the effectiveness of the pro-
18 gram funded through the grant.

19 (b) YOUTH EMPOWERMENT.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award
21 grants to nonprofit organizations to provide for the
22 establishment, operation, coordination, and evalua-
23 tion of programs to support the empowerment of
24 girls or boys in a variety of ways, including by—

1 (A) encouraging youth empowerment
2 through extracurricular activities and programs;
3 and

4 (B) supporting youth in a variety of ways
5 that—

6 (i) develop self-esteem, skills, and tal-
7 ents; and

8 (ii) celebrate characteristics unrelated
9 to sexual appeal or physical appearance.

10 (2) ACTIVITIES.—Programs funds under this
11 subsection may include—

12 (A) assisting youth in critiquing and re-
13 jecting sexualizing and objectifying messages
14 within society;

15 (B) teaching youth how to create and use
16 media that contribute to social change, espe-
17 cially in their communities;

18 (C) building confidence and self-efficacy;

19 (D) building leadership skills; or

20 (E) facilitating connections between girls
21 and women, and boys and men, as mentors.

22 (3) TARGETED PROJECTS.—The Secretary shall
23 ensure that funding under this subsection is tar-
24 geted towards (but need not be exclusively restricted
25 to) projects that are—

1 (A) focused in urban, rural, and other un-
2 derserved areas;

3 (B) gender-specific;

4 (C) focused on a variety of populations, in-
5 cluding racial and ethnic minorities and rep-
6 resentatives of several socioeconomic status
7 groups;

8 (D) culturally and linguistically appro-
9 priate for the populations being served; and

10 (E) developed in collaboration with the
11 long-term stakeholders.

12 (4) REPORT.—The Secretary shall require each
13 grant recipient under this subsection to submit to
14 the Secretary a report for each grant period that—

15 (A) describes how grant funds were used;
16 and

17 (B) evaluates the effectiveness of the pro-
18 gram funded through the grant.

19 (c) MATCHING FUNDS.—In awarding grants under
20 subsections (a) and (b), the Secretary may give priority
21 to applicants who agree to provide matching contributions
22 from non-Federal sources. Such contributions may be in
23 cash or in kind, fairly evaluated, including equipment,
24 training, curricula, or a preexisting evaluation framework.

1 (d) CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS.—A grant may be
2 made under subsection (a) or (b) only if the applicant in-
3 volved agrees to the following:

4 (1) Not more than 20 percent of the grant
5 funds will be used for administration, accounting, re-
6 porting, and program oversight functions.

7 (2) The grant will be used to supplement and
8 not supplant funds from other sources for increasing
9 the media literacy of, and empowering, youth.

10 (3) The applicant will abide by any limitations
11 deemed appropriate by the Secretary on any charges
12 to individuals receiving services pursuant to the
13 grant. As deemed appropriate by the Secretary, such
14 limitations on charges may vary based on the finan-
15 cial circumstances of the individual receiving serv-
16 ices.

17 (e) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date
18 of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the
19 Secretary shall prepare and submit to the appropriate
20 committees of the Congress a report on the grants award-
21 ed under subsections (a) and (b), including—

22 (1) a description of how the grant funds were
23 used; and

24 (2) an evaluation of the effectiveness of such
25 grants.

1 **SEC. 4. RESEARCH ON THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF GIRLS**
2 **AND WOMEN IN THE MEDIA ON YOUTHS' DE-**
3 **VELOPMENT.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through the
5 Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Preven-
6 tion and in coordination with the Director of the National
7 Institutes of Health and the Director of the Eunice Ken-
8 nedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and
9 Human Development, shall review, synthesize, and con-
10 duct or support research on the role and impact of depic-
11 tions of girls and women in the media on the psychological,
12 sexual, physical, and interpersonal development of youth
13 in the following areas:

14 (1) How depictions of girls and women in the
15 media affect youth in the following areas of child-
16 hood development:

17 (A) Cognitive areas such as mental health,
18 self-esteem, learning abilities, and problem solv-
19 ing skills.

20 (B) Physical areas such as diet, nutrition,
21 exercise, body image, substance abuse, and
22 sleeping and eating routines.

23 (C) Social behavioral areas such as rela-
24 tionships with peers, interactions with parents
25 and family members, aggression, high-risk be-

1 haviors, sexual behavior and development, and
2 positive social behaviors.

3 (2) How depictions of girls and women in the
4 media affect girls' and boys' perceptions in the fol-
5 lowing areas:

6 (A) Girls' perceptions and attitudes about
7 girls' and boys' abilities, equity, appearances,
8 and leadership potential.

9 (B) Boys' perceptions and attitudes about
10 girls' and boys' abilities, equity, appearances,
11 and leadership potential.

12 (3) How the sexualization and objectification of
13 girls and women in the media affects girls and boys.

14 (4) The impact of depictions of girls and
15 women in the media on youths' academic perform-
16 ance.

17 (5) The impact that depictions of girls and
18 women in the media has on girls and boys of diverse
19 racial and ethnic backgrounds and developmentally
20 across age.

21 (6) How factors such as format, length of expo-
22 sure, age of youth, and nature of parental involve-
23 ment impact youth.

24 (7) How food marketing and obesity campaigns
25 affect girls' and boys' body image, nutrition, and ex-

1 ercise, especially among eating-disordered youth pop-
2 ulations.

3 (8) Additional areas as designated by the Sec-
4 retary.

5 (b) NO DUPLICATION.—The Secretary shall ensure
6 that research activities under this section do not duplicate
7 other Federal research activities.

8 (c) REPORTS.—Not later than 2 years after the date
9 of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the
10 Secretary shall prepare and submit to the appropriate
11 committees of the Congress a report that—

12 (1) synthesizes the results of—

13 (A) research under this section; and

14 (B) other related research by the private
15 or public sector, including the Federal Govern-
16 ment;

17 (2) disaggregates such results by gender, race,
18 and socioeconomic background;

19 (3) includes a compendium of key existing re-
20 search on the role and impact of depictions of girls
21 and women in the media; and

22 (4) outlines gaps in research on the role and
23 impact of depictions of girl and women in the media
24 and identifies areas where future research is needed.

1 **SEC. 5. NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON GIRLS AND WOMEN IN**
2 **THE MEDIA.**

3 (a) **PURPOSES.**—The Federal Communications Com-
4 mission shall convene a task force, to be known as the
5 National Task Force on Girls and Women in the Media,
6 to develop voluntary steps and goals for promoting healthy
7 and positive depictions of girls and women in the media
8 for the benefit of all youth.

9 (b) **MEMBERSHIP.**—The Task Force shall include
10 representatives of the media industry, nonprofit and
11 youth-serving organizations, academia and research enti-
12 ties, psychologists and other child health professionals,
13 Federal agencies, and any other public or private entity
14 designated by the Federal Communications Commission.

15 (c) **RESPONSIBILITIES.**—The Task Force shall iden-
16 tify—

17 (1) concerns with how the media regulated by
18 the Federal Communications Commission portrays
19 girls and women;

20 (2) the impact of negative depictions of girls
21 and women on the development of youth; and

22 (3) voluntary steps and goals that the public
23 and private sectors can take to promote healthy and
24 positive media depictions of girls and women for the
25 benefit of all youth.

1 (d) INITIAL MEETING.—The Federal Communica-
2 tions Commission shall ensure that the Task Force holds
3 its first meeting not later than 90 days after the date of
4 the enactment of this Act.

5 (e) REPORT.—Not later than 12 months after the
6 date of the first meeting of the Task Force, the Federal
7 Communications Commission shall submit a report to
8 Congress that contains—

9 (1) the findings of the Task Force under sub-
10 section (c); and

11 (2) recommendations for areas of improvement
12 regarding depictions of girls and women in the
13 media.

14 **SEC. 6. LIMITATION.**

15 Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the
16 Secretary may not use amounts made available under this
17 Act to conduct or support activities or programs that are
18 duplicative of activities or programs already being carried
19 out through the Department of Health and Human Serv-
20 ices or the Department of Education.

21 **SEC. 7. DEFINITIONS.**

22 In this Act:

23 (1) The term “media” includes television pro-
24 grams, motion pictures, video games, music and
25 music videos, the Internet, social media, digital video

1 recorders, cell phones, magazines, newspapers, ad-
2 vertisements, and other emerging technologies de-
3 signed for communication, entertainment, education,
4 or information.

5 (2) The term “Secretary” means the Secretary
6 of Health and Human Services.

7 (3) The term “sexualization” refers to a cir-
8 cumstance when—

9 (A) a person’s value comes only from his
10 or her sexual appeal or behavior, to the exclu-
11 sion of other characteristics;

12 (B) a person is held to a standard that
13 equates physical attractiveness (narrowly de-
14 fined) and personal value with appearing, act-
15 ing, and being sexy;

16 (C) a person is sexually objectified—that
17 is, made into a thing for others’ sexual use,
18 rather than seen as a person with the capacity
19 for independent action and decisionmaking; or

20 (D) sexuality is inappropriately imposed
21 upon a person.

22 (4) The term “Task Force” means the National
23 Task Force on Girls and Women in the Media con-
24 vened under section 5.

1 **SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2 For the purpose of carrying out sections 3 and 4,
3 there is authorized to be appropriated, in addition to any
4 other amounts available for such purpose, \$40,000,000 for
5 each of fiscal years 2011 through 2015, of which—

6 (1) \$18,000,000 is for section 3(a);

7 (2) \$18,000,000 is for section 3(b); and

8 (3) \$4,000,000 is for section 4.

○