

HOUSE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
Testimony of Scott Hutson
Kansas Health and Fitness Association
House Bill 2204
February 7, 2005

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, my name is Scott Huston and I am pleased to appear before you in support of HB 2204. I am the owner of Maximus Fitness and Wellness here in Topeka and serve as President of the Kansas Health and Fitness Association.

All of us are concerned with promoting the health, and healthy lifestyles of our fellow citizens. The legislature and this Committee will be looking at promoting healthy food choices for school age children and other plans to fight obesity and to promote healthy lifestyles. All of us recognize that lack of exercise, smoking and poor eating habits, are the greatest preventable cause of the health crisis facing America today.

The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity published in 2001, suggested this as the Principles of the document:

Overweight and obesity have reached nationwide epidemic proportions. Both the prevention and treatment of overweight and obesity and their associated health problems are important public health goals. To achieve these goals The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity is committed to these five principles:

Promote the recognition of overweight and obesity as major public health problems.

Assist Americans in balancing healthful eating with regular physical activity to achieve and maintain a healthy or healthier body weight.

Identify effective and culturally appropriate interventions to prevent and treat overweight and obesity.

Encourage environmental changes that help prevent and treat overweight and obesity.

Develop and enhance public-private partnerships to help implement this vision.

The members of the Kansas Health and Fitness Association are committed to these same principles. We do the first four of these principles everyday in our clubs. We are asking you to enter into the fifth principle by working in a public-private partnership to encourage exercise and healthiness. This is what HB 2204 is all about.

HB 2204 will encourage Kansans to join health and fitness clubs by removing the sales tax from dues paid to join those clubs. Removal of the sales tax does not put dollars in the owners till, but it makes participating less expensive. In the past the legislature has removed sales tax in areas to make them more affordable -- utility bills and prescription drugs would be two examples.

We would urge you to take a similar step to promote exercise, fitness and healthy lifestyles by supporting HB 2204. I would be glad to answer any questions.

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