



**OKLAHOMA RECREATION
AND PARK SOCIETY**

PO BOX 1201
SAND SPRINGS, OK 74063

T 918-245-5756
F 918-245-6272
orpsok@aol.com

www.orps.net

February 21, 2011

Dear Representative,

As you study the bills before the Health Education Committee, especially HB 1270, keep in mind:

- Oklahoma ranks 46th in overall health
- Nearly 30% of Oklahoma children are overweight or obese
- Oklahoma is on pace to be the most obese state by 2013.

HB 1270 only asks that as funding becomes available, health education be taught for one semester in public schools during middle school grades (6,7,8). This is an important stage in the life of young people to learn about risky behaviors and healthy habits.

According to a 2009-2010 SHL program evaluation report by Steven Sternlof, OU Health Sciences Center, Elementary Schools who are currently participating in the Schools for Healthy Lifestyles program have seen API test scores increase the past three years.

The Oklahoma Recreation and Park Society is an affiliate of the National Recreation and Park Association. NRPA has a network of 21,000 citizens and professionals who work to promote healthy lifestyles, recreation initiatives, alternative transportation and conservation of natural and cultural resources. The NRPA Task Force on Childhood Obesity has noted that the obesity epidemic has grown in response to the building of sprawling, isolated suburbs that fail to offer sufficient close-to-home parks, recreation resources, sidewalks and safe, walkable access to daily amenities such as schools and recreation areas. Locally, park and recreation agencies are collectively the largest public provider of after school programs and play a key role in providing nutritious snacks and exercise programs.

HB 1270 is a tool for securing the health education of our younger students not only enhancing their ability to learn but also to educate them to make healthy recreational choices that will make a more productive adult citizen and enhance the quality of life for all communities.

Sincerely,

Patty

Patty J Dixon, CPRP
ORPS Executive Director

The mission of the Oklahoma Recreation and Park Society is to provide professionals with leadership, educational, personal and professional development opportunities in order to promote the importance of quality environmental, cultural, recreational and park services.