

# SENATE BILL 437

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CF HB 1311

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By: **Senators Jones, Forehand, Kramer, Madaleno, Pugh, Raskin, ~~and Rosapepe~~ Rosapepe, and Harrington**

Introduced and read first time: January 31, 2008

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: March 21, 2008

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## CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **State Designations - Walking as the State Exercise**

3 FOR the purpose of designating walking as the State exercise.

4 BY adding to

5 Article – State Government

6 Section 13–320

7 Annotated Code of Maryland

8 (2004 Replacement Volume and 2007 Supplement)

9 Preamble

10 WHEREAS, Heart disease is the number one cause of death each year in  
11 Maryland, and thousands of Maryland citizens suffer from disease and other health  
12 problems as a result of a lack of physical activity; and

13 WHEREAS, Mortality rates from coronary artery disease in Maryland rank in  
14 the top one–third in the nation with more than 12,000 people dying annually; and

15 WHEREAS, Physical inactivity and unhealthy eating are leading risk factors  
16 that contribute to at least 400,000 preventable deaths each year in the United States;  
17 and

18 WHEREAS, In 2004, approximately 23% of Americans and 31% of Marylanders  
19 engaged in no leisure time physical activity; and

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### EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike-out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 WHEREAS, In 2004, the obesity rate in Maryland was greater than 23%; and

2 WHEREAS, Maryland ranks in the top 50% of the heaviest states in the nation,  
3 with an adult obesity rate of 23.4%; and

4 WHEREAS, In the United States, the number of adults and children who are  
5 overweight has risen sharply during the past 25 years, and the percentage of adults  
6 and children who made trips on foot dropped during that same period; and

7 WHEREAS, Health care costs related to cardiovascular disease in Maryland are  
8 \$2.25 billion yearly, and the annual cost of heaviness and obesity in the United States  
9 is \$122.9 billion with \$64.1 billion in direct costs and \$58.8 billion in indirect costs;  
10 and

11 WHEREAS, If all inactive Americans were to participate in physical activity, an  
12 estimated \$76.6 billion in direct health costs would be saved; and

13 WHEREAS, One in five children are overweight or at risk of being overweight,  
14 and encouraging children to walk more can establish more physically active and  
15 healthy lifestyles; and

16 WHEREAS, Suicide is the third leading cause of death among children and  
17 young people and the eighth leading cause of death overall, and physical activity  
18 reduces feeling of depression and anxiety; and

19 WHEREAS, The U.S. Surgeon General recommends that all Americans walk at  
20 least 30 minutes per day, 5 days a week; and

21 WHEREAS, Walking is one of the best forms of exercise because it helps reduce  
22 cholesterol, improve cardiovascular fitness, improve blood pressure, reduce the risk of  
23 heart attack, and prevent colon cancer, breast cancer, osteoporosis, and diabetes; and

24 WHEREAS, More than 300,000 Maryland residents have diabetes, and an  
25 estimated one-third of the population remains undiagnosed, and walking 30 minutes  
26 a day cuts the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes by 58%; and

27 WHEREAS, Walking is ideally suited for rehabilitation after illness, surgery, or  
28 injury by strengthening the heart, lungs, and circulatory system; and

29 WHEREAS, The risk of injury while walking is less than with other forms of  
30 physical activity, and injuries incurred while walking are less severe than with many  
31 other exercises; and

32 WHEREAS, Walking is a fun activity that friends and family can do together;  
33 and

1 WHEREAS, Walking promotes informal interactions between people and  
2 strengthens community, and many neighborhoods lack any social contact between  
3 neighbors; and

4 WHEREAS, Walking is a natural activity that does not require any specialized  
5 equipment or training and is an inexpensive physical activity that most Maryland  
6 citizens can do easily, at any time during the day; and

7 WHEREAS, Walking is as close to a universal physical activity as there is and  
8 can be easily integrated into the daily routine of most Marylanders; and

9 WHEREAS, Most people in Maryland already walk every day and a person can  
10 engage in other activities while walking, such as meeting and greeting neighbors,  
11 talking with friends and family, observing nature or the community, and running  
12 errands or shopping; and

13 WHEREAS, Environments that encourage walking help to promote tourism and  
14 commerce; and

15 WHEREAS, Increased walking is an important facet of livable and sustainable  
16 communities; and

17 WHEREAS, Walking is an environmentally friendly method of transportation,  
18 which helps to reduce reliance on automobiles while cutting traffic congestion and air  
19 pollution; and

20 WHEREAS, Walking as a symbol for Maryland will benefit individual citizens  
21 and Maryland as a whole; now, therefore,

22 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
23 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

24 **Article – State Government**

25 **13-320.**

26 **WALKING IS THE STATE EXERCISE.**

27 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
28 October 1, 2008.