



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

Senate Co-Leader Jeff Klein, Assemblyman Felix Ortiz, Time Warner Cable, and Celebrity Contestants from NBC's "The Biggest Loser" Announce Measures to Combat Obesity

JEFFREY D. KLEIN January 8, 2014

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ALBANY, NY – In marking the first day of the 2014 Legislative Session, Senate Co- Leader Jeffrey D. Klein, along with representatives from Time Warner Cable, celebrities from NBC's *The Biggest Loser*, and Assemblyman Felix Ortiz today doubled down on their efforts to reverse the rising obesity trends among children and young adults in New York.

The collaborative partnership was a chance to highlight the successful passage of health-related bills that were signed into state law last year. It was also an opportunity to promote new legislation, sponsored by Senator Klein,

with a similar goal to promote healthy and active lifestyles, proper nutrition, and rigorous exercise in underserved communities.

Senate Co-Leader and Leader of the Independent Democratic Conference Jeffrey D. Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) said, “Every New Year brings the hope of fulfilling resolutions that will improve our lives. As we all know, these resolutions often center around health, so we want to kick off 2014 by helping teenagers set and achieve their goals for a healthier lifestyle. If we want to address the disturbing upward trends of obesity among our children, we need to take tangible steps now right away and that begins with education. By working together with all of the stakeholders, including our friends at Time Warner Cable, we can save a generation from the illness of obesity and make New York a much healthier state.

Last year, the IDC launched a *Teen Health Awareness Campaign* which focuses on reducing adolescent obesity, educating students about the health consequences of short and long-term alcohol and substance abuse, and raising awareness among young women and health professionals about endometriosis, an often undiagnosed but debilitating disease.

As part of this campaign, the IDC launched a Teen Health Awareness and Education survey, a 23-question survey for teenagers in junior high and high schools throughout the State. The survey was designed to gauge knowledge on three issues that can have a great impact on their health: obesity, substance abuse, and endometriosis. The survey was anonymous, allowing students to answer questions honestly without fear of embarrassment. In total, 3,915 teenagers responded to the survey. These responses come from each area of New York, and therefore present a general picture of teenagers’ knowledge on these important health issues.

The results indicated that many teenagers lack an overall understanding of proper diet and do not get the recommended amount of exercise each day. These, among other factors, contribute to the rising obesity rates among young adults.

Key Facts and Findings

ü **28% of male and 26% of female teenagers do not know what the recommended amount of calories they should ingest daily**

ü **Only 45% of teenagers understand what the Body Mass Index measures, and 54% cannot identify the difference between being overweight and obesity**

ü **More than 3 in 5 teenagers understand they should get at least 1 hour of exercise a day, and limit “screen time” to 1 to 2 hours daily**

ü **New York’s teenagers are not fully aware of the breadth of weight management activities available to them. Only 55% knew about the benefits of seeking counseling if impacted by stress. Additionally, half of teenagers do not know about the benefits of a good night’s sleep on weight loss**

ü **Teenagers lack the necessary information on the health hazards of obesity, with nearly 1 in 5 respondents unable to identify even 1 complication**

ü **43% of respondents cannot identify the symptoms of type 2 diabetes, while 39% are not aware of the complications arising from the disease**

In response to these results, in the coming year, Senator Klein will push four additional bills that will improve the health and well-being of our New York students:

- **S. 2331:** This bill would permit insurers and health management organizations (HMOs) to provide individual or small group insurance policies that will offer premium discounts or enhancements to individuals participating in qualified wellness programs. Passing this bill into law would provide a new avenue to keep health insurance rates low, while also encouraging individuals to participate in programs shown to improve physical and mental wellbeing.
- **S. 2363:** This bill would enact a number of provisions to curtail the incidence of asthma and other respiratory diseases, which include an Asthma Disease Management and Control Program; a program to prevent in-utero exposure to tobacco; new standards for the training of teachers/personnel to identify asthma emergencies; increase efficiency standards to minimize school bus exhaust on school grounds; and increasing the number of students who can have and use an inhaler at school
- **S. 2374:** This bill, the Omnibus Obesity and Respiratory Illness Reduction Act, would push additional provisions that would establish a voluntary artificial trans fat reduction program through the DOH; expand recreational areas that elementary and secondary schools provide; establish the Obesity and Respiratory Disease Research Fund; and include new teaching curriculum in science classes about the health risks associated with child obesity.
- **S. 2437:** This bill directs schools to increasing screening for childhood obesity by expanding the activities that school health services engage in determine the existence of diseases or disabilities relating to childhood obesity. These exams would also be able to include a diabetes risk analysis for students with a heightened risk of contracting the disease. Also, school district nutrition advisory committees would be established to offer recommendations on the district's nutritional policies, while elementary and secondary schools would be required to ensure has adequate time to exercise during lunch periods.

Joining the chorus of speakers were Olivia Ward and Hannah Curlee, the season 11 winner and runner-up to NBC's hit reality television show *The Biggest Loser*, whom spoke from their own unique experiences involving the challenges of combating obesity. Olivia and Hannah both spoke at length about their struggles with this disease and how the show helped transform their lives for the better. They also spoke about their blog, www.MyFitspiration.com, which they created to showcase their latest fitness routines and fashion videos through their own YouTube channel.

Throughout the day, both Olivia and Hannah performed live, scheduled, on stage demonstrations on wellness and proper nutrition, including a "no-gym needed" exercise workout, 'how-to's' for healthy eating, tips for parents to keep their kids active, and ways to keep moving at the office.

Olivia Ward, season 11 winner of NBC's The Biggest Loser, "I want to thank Senators Jeff Klein, Assemblyman Felix Ortiz and Time Warner Cable for the opportunity to be a part of such an important discussion on health and wellness. Hannah and I learned so much on the show about the significance of making health and fitness a priority in our lives, and we are excited to help encourage others to make healthy lifestyle changes, too."

Hannah Curlee, season 11 runner-up of NBC's The Biggest Loser, said, "The obesity epidemic in America is still a big problem and I know weight-loss can be an overwhelming challenge for many people. I was fortunate to be chosen to be on The Biggest Loser and am forever grateful for the life-changing experience the show afforded me. I want those at home to know they can do it, too...one step at a time."

Assemblyman Felix W. Ortiz said, "When we help people to make healthy choices for themselves and their children we not only improve their quality of life, we greatly increase the odds that they will pass on these choices to the next generation. With respect to the obesity epidemic facing our country and its collateral public health effects, we must continue to be part of the solution through our own actions. We can strengthen our families and communities and create brighter futures for our children if we keep fighting for those who most need our help. Prevention is always easier and less expensive than treatment."

Rory Whelan, RVP, Government Relations, Time Warner Cable said, “We’re delighted to join Senator Jeff Klein and Assemblyman Felix Ortiz to help address the critical topic of child obesity prevention and the benefits of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Time Warner Cable offers a variety of health & wellness programming on Time Warner Cable News and via our On Demand platform that are great resources for families to stay healthy. And we’re thrilled that Hannah and Olivia are joining us at the Capitol --- they are really the big winners for all the work they do to help adults and kids keep fit and lead healthier lives.

About Time Warner Cable

Time Warner Cable Inc. (NYSE: TWC) is among the largest providers of video, high-speed data and voice services in the United States, connecting more than 15 million customers to entertainment, information and each other. Time Warner Cable Business Class offers data, video and voice services to businesses of all sizes, cell tower backhaul services to wireless carriers and enterprise-class, cloud-enabled hosting, managed applications and services. Time Warner Cable Media, the advertising arm of Time Warner Cable, offers national, regional and local companies innovative advertising solutions. More information about the services of Time Warner Cable is available at www.twc.com, www.twcbc.com and www.twcmedia.com.

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