



News Release FOR IMMEDIATE REVIEW

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THE OBESITY SOCIETY CRITICIZES MISSISSIPPI BILL

(SILVER SPRING, MD, FEBRUARY 4, 2008) The Obesity Society today called House Bill 282, a bill in the Mississippi Legislature to ban persons with obesity from restaurants “the most ill-conceived plan to address a public health crisis ever proposed,” according to Morgan Downey, Executive Vice President.

The bill, introduced in January, would prohibit restaurants in Mississippi from serving persons who are obese. “We have seen many blatant efforts at discrimination against persons with obesity,” said Morgan Downey, “but none as cruel and as harmful. What do the authors think of this bill want to do: starve persons with obesity? Ban them from grocery stores?” The Obesity Society is a 25 year old non-profit professional society composed of over 1,700 researchers and clinicians. Combating discrimination against persons with obesity is one of the group’s missions.

According to Mr. Downey, discrimination against persons with obesity is well documented and constitutes perhaps the last, acceptable channel of discrimination. The organization recently published a slide presentation on weight bias on its website, www.obesityonline.org. “Efforts like this assume that obesity is a simple matter of personal choice and if the choices are taken away or restricted, the problem will go away. In fact, we know that obesity is a complex, multifaceted problem involving genetics, the environment, and behavior. Simplistic solutions not only don’t work, they distract us from addressing core problems,” according to Mr. Downey.

The Obesity Society is the leading scientific society dedicated to the study of obesity. The Obesity Society is committed to encouraging research on the causes, treatment, and prevention of obesity as well as to keeping the scientific community and public informed of new advances in the field. For more information, please visit www.naaso.org.