

What will it be: liberty or lard?

Congress has voted to reform the Child Nutrition Act, increasing federal reimbursement of school meals beyond inflation. The government will determine what constitutes acceptable school meals, clamp down on the availability of junk food in campus vending machines and at other than fundraising "bake sales" and facilitate more than 100,000 additional Medicaid-eligible children receiving free meals.

The bill also orders cafeterias to make water freely available.

About 8 percent (\$375 million) of the bill's cost is to fund state-level grants for nutrition education and anti-obesity efforts. The First Lady, who has championed this effort, states that the bill will "combat childhood obesity."

Opponents of the 10-year, \$4.5 billion measure suggest the bill's proscriptive fat- and calories-cutting nutritional standards go too far and cost too much despite "offsetting" controversial cuts in food stamp funding that Democrats promise to reverse "one day" if and when they regain control of the House of Representatives.

The bill addresses a frightening crisis. Two thirds of Americans and 18 percent of adolescents are overweight or obese. The cost is gargantuan. Direct medical costs of obesity-related diseases are \$147 billion per year. Added to that is another \$8,000 per obese individual per year from the cost of earlier death, diminished revenue production and even in-



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creased fuel.

The reasons we are fat go beyond what any bill can fix. We are obese in diet and daily life. As we progress technologically, we produce less and consume more. As the world gets smaller, interpersonal distances grow as so-called social networks reward an increasingly sedentary lifestyle.

Adolescent athleticism is an oxymoron. Our young boys and girls of summer should be out on the playing fields, straining to tweak out singles and beating out metaphorical throws to first. Instead, they tweet and eat. Entitlements have encouraged enfeeblement of head, heart and hamstrings.

We don't need a nanny nutritionist state, commendable bonafide benefits underpinning this bill notwithstanding. It is sadly foreboding that the state, which fosters corporate corpulence, now comes to save us from ourselves.

What is more ominous, the toll of too many Twinkies or the warning knell of nagging nanny state nutritionists we invited to regulate what we are doing to ourselves? Both are bad and expecting governments to be governesses will end poorly.

The congressional kitchen and cabinets need to trim some fat as well. Bureaucrats cannot butter us up to into believing a banquet of social justice awaits all if we just spread the fat around. The time has also come for management change in the international white

house of guilt. Their steady diet of defaming home-cooked, uniquely American recipes that brought us to world leadership has added weightiness we can no longer bear.

This corruption of the original recipe for a successful constitutional republic must stop. Failing to leaven our daily bread with the yeasts of self-reliance, individual initiative and personal accountability will have us fall irreparably behind a world just beginning to learn the lessons of the empty calories of socialism in all its seasonings.

Although it is hard to spot that original recipe at work in our culture, the ingredients have not changed: studying and staying in schools; national pride and service; avoiding drugs, divorce and all manners of debauchery; saving for retirement and spending responsibly; charitable acts; integrity and striving for excellence in all endeavors; and faith in family and in faith itself and not playing God or paying others to do so for us. The cookbooks of our founders are accessible to all.

America needs to go on a diet of old-fashioned individualism, opportunity and patriotism. It is hard to be fat when fighting for freedom and striving to excel. So with apologies to Patrick Henry, it seems time for each American to choose, "Give me liberty or give me lard."

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