

**2007-2008  
CBC Writing Competition**

CBC Student Entry  
Category: Non-Fiction  
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**The Scales Are Rising**

XL and XXL, these letters should signify the Superbowls that will eventually grace the plasma screens in the coming years. However, in today's world of fast food and even faster Internet these roman numerals have come to represent clothing sizes. Obesity has become a pandemic that has swept across the nation over the past several years. There have been more cases of diabetes and heart problems directly related to obesity in the United States in recent years than in the past. A recorded 64.5% of the population, or about 120 million people are obese. It is apparent with the latest studies that this issue cannot be left in the hands of the common public and must be dealt with by a higher power – the government (Hellmich, Obesity in America).

Apparently the only food available to the masses is the fatty, greasy "food" provided by our beloved fast food chains. McDonald's, Burger King, Carl's Jr., and Taco Bell have become staples for all meals of the day. Taco Bell has even enlisted the fourth meal. With people focusing heavily on work, school, and family there is no time left to sit down and have a healthy meal. Parents are always on the run getting their 2.5 kids off to piano, soccer, ballet, etc. and have put eating healthy in the back seat with the baby. It is now acceptable for KFC to be considered a good alternative to the cheeseburger, and parents are seen as rock stars for bringing home that finger licking goodness to the family.

This obvious lack of respect for the health of one's family needs to be handled immediately. The first step in fighting the evils of the fast food chain is to single-handedly shut down each and every one of those grease guzzling eating establishments. It does not matter that countless people will be out of a job or that the economy of the United States might considerably weaken, but what is important is that the health of the nation will strengthen ten fold. When it comes right down to it, all people really have is their health and that should take top priority. Shutting down these establishments is like removing the cheese from the mousetrap that is obesity. Unhealthy foods will no longer be just a drive-thru away.

One by one thousands of chains across the nation will close their doors for the last time. The actual closing down of these chains unfortunately, may pose as a problem. Because of the fear that individuals might revolt against the closing, all those found in direct hindrance of the process will be fined \$100,000. Failure to meet the fine will result in immediate sentencing of one month in jail. The food remaining from these establishments will be sent to third world countries where people have the need to gain weight.

With the deletion of these abominations families will have no choice but to sit down and have a healthy domestic banquet. Following this victory mothers in the workplace will be allowed to leave work early with pay in order to ensure that a healthy meal is prepared for the family. Some may call this discrimination, which is why men that can prove they are the sole providers of sustenance at the table will also have the privilege of going home prior to the normal clock out time.

If the amount of obese people continues to grow after this course of action, a new idea will be brought forth to the public. A recent study found that 31% of about 59 million adults over the age of 20 were obese (Hellmich, Obesity in America). With findings like these it is easy to understand why one course of action doesn't realistically begin to trim the waistline of the country. The next step in the battle against the life-sucking fiend known as obesity is governmental control of everyday meals. When one looks at the capital of this freedom loving country, they see fit and healthy Democrats and Republicans. It is obvious to the common observer that those in the high government positions have the right approach when it comes to eating right. Because of their commitment to their own health, it comes as no surprise that their input in the meals of the rest of the country would greatly serve the population of the United States.

The only way to ensure Americans the correct foods would be to allow them to only eat government issued packages of food. Every family in the US would be required to have a house inspection to confiscate all remaining food not graciously provided to them. Following this action, the head of the household would be required to send signed paperwork detailing the number of occupants in the house and their ages. After this piece of documentation is approved, designated parcels of pre-made amounts of food would be shipped to the home. Of course the family would have to pay for a months worth of food and also would be responsible for the shipping and handling costs. The food delivered on the first of the month would be the only food available for

that month. If a family ran out they would not be able to purchase more. This would guarantee that the designated proportions were followed correctly.

Food packages would include the recommended daily amounts of all the food groups. Vegetables and fruits would be emphasized in the package. Meals available for order could consist of Carbohydrate free, sugar-free, low sodium meats and cheeses. Bread would be considered a treat and as such would only be included in the deluxe food packages. To replace this popular fattening sandwich counterpart, cardboard like tortillas would be used in sandwich making. There would be absolutely no candy or sweets available to any and all household participants. Those found in possession of these devilish confections would be prosecuted and fined their month's worth of bread. Also not appearing on the list would be fizzy-sugary drinks, or soda, as it is known to most. With only healthy foods available to the public the waistlines would quickly be trimmed thus creating healthier members of society.

It is common knowledge that there are certain professionals that view exercise as a reasonable solution to lessening obesity across the country. Though in theory this would be a quick solution, in practice it would never be successful. There is no way a person in this fast paced world would be able to exercise for the amount recommended by experts. One outlandish suggestion is walking 30 – 60 minutes three to four times a week (Hellmich, Research Fleshes Out). What successful person has the time to take an hour out of their day to go for a walk? Also, it is no secret that exercising can be dangerous. Countless studies have reported incidents of falling off the treadmill injuring hundreds of people yearly. Not to mention the risk of being hit by a car that

one takes when attempting to go for a walk. Also, TV has become a vital part of people's lives, and with American Idol and Dancing With the Stars on more than two times a week it is impossible to fit physical exertion into a daily routine. In a society where time is a priceless currency exercise is that last resort when trying to battle obesity.

Of course, there are those troubled few that will fight this government act. Those in question will wish to do harm to themselves by hoarding secret stashes of sugar, bread, and Starbucks. Although at first only harming themselves their outlandish actions could begin affecting those around them. In order to alleviate the worry on this matter, sensors and cameras would be installed in every home across the country. With these measures in place it would be simple to ensure that all families were following the recommended diet. Of course these cameras would need to be monitored 24/7, opening up many jobs for those that originally slaved away at the grills of Hades in the once popular fast food chains. Throughout all of these actions the government would just be looking out for the common good, and battling a foe that few Americans would have been able to fight on their own.

Obesity in the United States must take precedence. Until this battle is under control matters such as global warming, the war on terror, and gas prices must be swept under the rug for further review. In order for our children to grow up in a world where it is more common to look like Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen instead of Tony Soprano action must be taken. Countries across the world are outwardly laughing at the state of things in the United States. Time to fight the fat!