

February 8, 2021

Sen. John Cornyn
5300 Memorial Drive Suite 980
Houston, TX 77007

Dear Senator John Cornyn:

I am writing to urge you to cosponsor H.R. 1887, supporting the “National Institute of Nutrition Act” which would establish a National Institute of Nutrition within the National Institute of Health with the purpose of facilitating and helping coordinate extensive research into nutrients, foods, and their relationships to better health.

As you may be aware, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes have topped the charts for leading causes of death in the U.S., responsible for an accumulation of approximately 1,496,294 deaths per year. Based on government survey data, 44% of Americans have a chronic condition such as heart disease, cancer, hypertension, diabetes, or high cholesterol levels; 13% have three or more of these conditions. Furthermore, 73% of American adults have been classified as overweight or obese with numbers steadily rising. Studies have shown that lifestyle factors exert the strongest overall influence on health and longevity with diet being one of the most influential factors.

In fiscal year 2019, the federal government spent nearly \$1.2 trillion on health care. Of that, Medicare claimed roughly \$644 billion; Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) about \$427 billion, and veterans’ medical care about \$80 billion. We cannot afford to continue at this rate and must invest in unlocking the solutions to these major health care issues. Interventions targeted at preventing or delaying the onset of serious and debilitating illnesses is paramount.

The National Institute of Nutrition Act would allow for further research into optimal diets for weight loss, cancer, diabetes, pre-diabetes, allergies, inflammatory disease, disease of the gut, as well as links to diet and mental health issues - such as memory loss, the developing brain in infants and children, dementia, depression, brain injuries, and PTSD. Creating the National Institute of Nutrition must be a national priority in order to further investigate the links between nutrition and disease so that we may begin to decrease chronic diseases and health care spending in our country.

Your support of this bill is critical towards making a difference to leverage nutrition in order to reduce health care costs and improve the health outcomes of our population. I look forward to receiving your reply about this important issue. Thank you again for your prompt attention to this matter.

Warm regards,

Ashley Watson Stephens

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