

Max Gabovitch McCain Commentary

“Wellness and fitness, wellness and fitness, wellness and fitness.

“My friends, the most disturbing information that we have lately is amongst teenagers that there is an increase in obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes. Now, you are not going to be able to care for and America that doesn’t practice wellness and fitness.”

This comment came from presidential hopeful John McCain when he made a campaign stop in Indianapolis recently.

At first, Senator McCain’s comments made me feel that he was poking fun at the American people for being lazy and out of shape. But according to his campaign Web site, he feels that we must teach our children about health, nutrition, and exercise -- vital life information.

When he mentioned kids’ health in particular, I decided to hear him out. I have had an overweight gym teacher who was hard to take seriously when he talked about health.

I respected Senator McCain when he talked about staying fit. I read one article about how at age 70, McCain hiked the Grand Canyon with his son for three days. But then again, I read that his diet consists of mostly donuts and Coke while on his campaign bus. McCain even jokes about his own age and health saying: “I am older than dirt and have more scars than Frankenstein.”

I’m not concerned that he would be the oldest president EVER if elected. Even though I am only 14 years old, I get to see firsthand how older Americans continue to make contributions to society. My 74-year-old grandfather, Ed Gabovitch, is a doctor who specializes in arthritis care. He is still working and is unlikely to retire anytime soon.

When I think though about it in the end, the issue of kids being physically fit starts with gym classes, and they need to be part of the curriculum at every school. As McCain said there has been increase lately in obesity, blood pressure and Type 2 diabetes among teenagers.

During the Bush administration, many schools have been eliminating gym classes due to increased funding needed for “No Child Left Behind” education reform. Although McCain is a supporter of No Child Left Behind, he has said that school legislation needs a lot of changes.

If McCain wants to cut obesity and help kids become physically fit, he needs to make sure that health and fitness are included as part of these education reforms.

For Y-Press, I’m Max Gabovitch.