

April 23, 2009

Dear Senator/Representative:

We urge you to make school children's health a priority in the 111th Congress by cosponsoring the Fitness Integrated with Teaching (FIT) Kids Act of 2009 (S.634/H.R.1585). This legislation is sponsored by Representatives Ron Kind (D-WI) and Zach Wamp (R-TN) in the House, and by Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA) and John Ensign (R-NV) in the Senate. It increases children's physical activity throughout the school day and ensures that they learn how to live healthy lives through exercise and diet.

Childhood obesity in the U.S. has reached truly epidemic proportions, and schools need to be part of the solution. The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend that children engage in sixty minutes or more of physical activity each day and, given the many hours kids spend at school, they need to be active during the school day. School is also where kids learn how to be active and to eat a healthy diet through physical education, health education and other programs.

There are additional reasons why schools should focus on ensuring that kids are physically active. Evidence suggests that fit, active children learn more effectively and achieve more academically. Studies have also shown that physical activity has a positive impact on cognitive ability and preventing tobacco use, insomnia, depression and anxiety.

The FIT Kids Act amends the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to ensure that children's health is not left behind as they strive for academic success. It integrates physical activity within existing school and afterschool programs. It empowers parents to support at home the education that their children receive in the area of exercise and nutrition. It educates principals and teachers on how to incorporate activity and to teach wellness in the classroom. And it assists schools by funding a study to generate innovative ways to increase physical activity during the school day.

The FIT Kids Act can make a real difference in the fight against childhood obesity without overburdening schools, districts and states. Through its multi-faceted approach, this is an unprecedented opportunity to start to bring this epidemic under control. We hope that you will support this legislation.

Sincerely,

Afterschool Alliance
American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance
American Association for Health Education
American Association for Physical Activity and Recreation
American Beverage Association
American College of Sports Medicine
American Diabetes Association

American Heart Association*
American Medical Athletic Association
American Public Health Association
American Running Association
American School Counselor Association
American School Health Association
American Stroke Association
Amerinet
Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals
BlueCross BlueShield Association
Campaign to End Obesity
CardioVision 2020
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Cleveland Clinic
Colorado Children's Campaign
Community Adolescent Nutrition and Fitness (CANFIT)
Cooking With Kids, Inc
Directors of Health Promotion and Education
El Camino Children and Family Services
Everlast Climbing Industries
First Focus
Fitness Forward
Grocery Manufacturers Association
Healthy Schools Campaign
Humana
Hunter College Nutrition Program
Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance
Institute for America's Health
International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association
International SPA Association
League of American Bicyclists
Life 180 Inc
Loveland T-n-T Tuesdays SRTS Program
National Action Against Obesity
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association for Girls and Women in Sport
National Association of Health Education Centers
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association for Sport and Physical Education
National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity
National Dance Association
National Education Taskforce
National Football League
National Health Foundation
National PTA
New England Coalition for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

New York State Nutrition Council
North Carolina Alliance for Athletics, Health, Physical Education, Recreation and
Dance
Obesity Action Coalition
Ohio Public Health Association
Oral Health America
Partners for a Healthy Nevada
Partnership for Prevention
Prevention Institute
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association
Researchers against Inactivity-related Disorders
Roche
Save the Children USA
School Nutrition Association
Shaping America's Health
SPARK (Sports, Play, and Active Recreation for Kids)
Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association
The Cooper Institute
The YBH Project, Inc.
Trust for America's Health
TRI-PAC Health and Wellness Advocacy
United Fresh Produce Association
United States Water Fitness Association
YMCA of the USA

* Please respond via Derek Scholes (202-785-7927; derek.scholes@heart.org) at the American Heart Association.