



1900 Association Drive • Reston, VA 20191

November 17, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Kline  
2439 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott  
1201 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Alexander, Senator Murray, Congressman Kline and Congressman Scott,

As organizations dedicated to the health and wellness of our nation's youth, we strongly believe in the preventive benefits of health, fitness and well-being and have worked tirelessly with your staff members to ensure that health and physical education are elevated within federal education law to provide our nation's students with the fundamental tools for a healthy life.

We are thrilled that health and physical education are designated as core subjects and the Physical Education Program (PEP) grant is included in the US Senate's *Every Child Achieves Act*. These are key legislative priorities that our organizations have advocated for over the past several years. We appreciate the hard work and the foresight that went into including these critical provisions in the Senate education bill and ask that they remain as the bill is finalized at conference.

Created by the late US Senator Ted Stevens, the PEP grant has enabled schools to create innovative physical education and nutrition programs and train teachers in standards-based, cutting edge teaching methods for more than a decade. PEP requires schools to focus on sustainability of these essential programs and to ensure that the entire school community is benefitting from these activities and skills that are acquired. We respectfully request that PEP remain in the bill and continue to be an incubator for health and wellness in our nation's schools.

SHAPE America – Society of Health and Physical Educators

800.213.7193 (toll-free)

703.476.9527 (fax)

[www.shapeamerica.org](http://www.shapeamerica.org)

health. moves. minds.

When the federal education law was last reauthorized as *No Child Left Behind*, no one could have imagined that physical education and health education would have fallen by the wayside, but that is exactly what happened. As childhood obesity rates have spiked, the amount of time a student spends in health education and physical education has decreased. Most schools don't have the necessary funds or qualified personnel to provide students with quality instruction.

Today, one-third of our nation's children are overweight or obese therefore educating them in physical competence, health-related fitness and healthful behaviors is critical to their development and long-term success as healthy and productive citizens. Effective physical education and health education programs are essential components of a total K-12 curriculum. Recent studies, such as the [Health in Mind report](#), show that health and fitness are linked to improved academic performance, cognitive ability, and behavior as well as reduced truancy. The prestigious [Institute of Medicine](#) even noted the importance of physical education to help combat childhood obesity and recommended that it be designated as a core academic subject.

Physical education increases physical activity participation, health-related fitness, social responsibility and enjoyment of physical activity. Health education is also essential to support the formation of health-literate and health-conscious adults, and the development of lifelong healthful habits that can help reduce the enormous burden of health care costs to this nation. Additionally, the lack of physically fit and health-literate graduates has become a national security issue - being overweight or obese has become the leading medical reason why applicants fail to qualify for military service.

We watched as both chambers of Congress debated and marked up their education bills and there was a constant message regardless of party affiliation or chamber, which was that *No Child Left Behind* is a broken law that needs to be fixed. We could not agree more. As a result of that law physical education and health education have practically vanished from a student's school day. We learned that subjects not considered "core" are frequently marginalized and too often eliminated due to a lack of funding or administrative priority.

Senator Alexander and Senator Murray, Congressman Kline and Congressman Scott, thank you for your consideration of our comments and your continued support for our nation's youth. Please know we stand ready to assist as the two bills are conferenced.

#### National Organizations

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Action for Healthy Kids

health. moves. minds.

American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
American Council on Exercise  
American Diabetes Association  
American Institute for Cancer Research  
American Public Health Association  
American School Health Association  
ASCD  
Association of Accredited Public Health Programs  
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists  
Boys & Girls Clubs of America  
Cairn Guidance, Inc  
FlagHouse, Inc.  
Focused Fitness  
Green Schools National Network  
HealthCorps  
Healthy Schools Campaign  
Hepatitis Foundation International  
HOPSports, Inc.  
International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association  
National Association of County & City Health Officials  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Athletic Trainers' Association  
National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity  
National Council of Youth Sports (NCYS)  
National Council on Strength & Fitness  
National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA)  
National Physical Activity Plan Alliance  
National Physical Education Institute  
National Recreation and Park Association  
National Women's Law Center  
NEA Healthy Futures  
PHIT America  
Pop Warner Little Scholars

Prevent Cancer Foundation  
Project Million  
Richard Simmons' Ask America PE Crusade  
Road Runners Club of America  
Safe Routes to School National Partnership  
School Social Work Association of America  
Sports & Fitness Industry Association  
SHAPE America - Society of Health and Physical Educators  
Shape Up America!  
Society for Public Health Education  
SPARK/Sportime  
The Cooper Institute  
Trust for America's Health  
US Corporate Games

State and Local Organizations

Alabama State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
Arizona Health and Physical Education  
Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition  
CA4Health  
Connecticut Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
Connecticut Association of Administrators of Health and Physical Education  
Georgia Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
Horizon Community Learning Center  
Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
Iowa Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
Kansas Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
Kentucky Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
Louisiana Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
Maine Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
Manatee YourChoice Health Plan  
Maryland State Advisory Council on Physical Fitness  
Mascenic Education Association  
Massachusetts Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

health. moves. minds.

New Hampshire Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
New Jersey Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
New York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
North Dakota Society for Health and Physical Educators  
Ohio Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
Oklahoma Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
Oregon Society of Health and Physical Educators  
Pennsylvania State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
Real Food for Kids - Montgomery, AL  
Seneca Nation of Indians  
Society of Health and Physical Educators Florida  
Society of Health and Physical Educators Idaho  
Society of Health and Physical Educators Michigan  
Society of Health and Physical Educators Montana  
Society of Health and Physical Educators Nebraska  
Society of Health and Physical Educators New Mexico  
Society of Health and Physical Educators South Dakota  
Society of Health and Physical Educators Washington  
South Carolina Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
Tennessee Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
Texas Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
Thomas Jefferson University, College of Population Health  
Virginia Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
Wisconsin Health & Physical Education  
Wyoming Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance