



Heart Disease and Stroke. You're the Cure.

Bill Summary: S.1033/H.R.2178

Fitness Integrated with Teaching Kids (FIT Kids) Act

A bill to enhance children's health in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

OUR POSITION

America's children should receive daily, quality physical education and learn how to lead healthy lifestyles. Regular, quality physical education will help stem the tide of childhood obesity, which will improve life-long health, as well as enhance academic and emotional growth. Our children need a head start on a healthy life.

SUPPORTERS

American Heart Association
American Stroke Association

LEADING SPONSORS

Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI)
Rep. Aaron Schock (R-IL)

Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA)

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WHAT THE BILL WOULD DO

The FIT Kids Act would increase children's physical activity throughout the school day and ensure that they learn how to live healthy lives through exercise and diet. The bill would:

- Implement programs to support evidenced-based physical education, activity, and fitness, and nutrition by promoting activities that increase and enable active student participation; are comprehensive; help students understand, improve, or maintain their physical well-being; enhance the physical, mental, social, and emotional development of students; and establish lifelong healthy lifestyles.
- Authorize grants to states to develop or enhance data collection systems so local leaders have the information they need to improve physical education and activity within their schools and communities.
- Support professional development for health and physical education teachers and principals to boost students' ability to learn, and to promote healthy lifestyles and physical activity.
- Include opportunities for parents and guardians to support their children in leading a healthy and active life.
- Provide assistance to schools to provide equal physical activity opportunities for students with disabilities.

WHY CONGRESS SHOULD ENACT THIS LEGISLATION

- Childhood obesity is an epidemic. About one in every three school-age American children and adolescents is overweight or obese.
- The Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that children engage in 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day. Schools are in a unique position to provide opportunities for children to be active.
- Increasing physical activity a critical component of any program to combat childhood obesity, yet many schools are cutting back on physical education programs. Only 3.8% of elementary, 7.9% of middle, and 2.1% of high schools provide daily physical education. Twenty-two percent of schools do not require physical education at all.
- A lack of regular physical activity can hurt a child's academic, social and emotional development. Research shows that healthy children learn more effectively and achieve more academically.
- The new Institute of Medicine report, *Educating the Student Body: Taking Physical Activity and Physical Education to School*, recently reinforced the evidence and need, and offered recommendations for quality physical education courses and increased physical activity throughout the school day.