

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

March XX, 2014

The Honorable Jack Kingston  
Chairman  
Labor, Health and Human Services, and  
Education Subcommittee  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Labor, Health and Human Services, and  
Education Subcommittee  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kingston and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We urge your continued support in strengthening the Carol White Physical Education for Progress (PEP) Program in the Department of Education. This program is making a significant contribution not only to our children's short- and long-term health, but also to their education. We ask you to once again support PEP in the Fiscal Year 2015 appropriations process with level funding of \$75 million.

Almost two-thirds of Americans are either overweight or obese and almost one quarter lead sedentary lifestyles. The impact of this epidemic is dramatic and the consequences severe. Obesity can lead to diabetes, heart disease and other life-threatening medical conditions. We consistently hear from educators and health care professionals that are becoming increasingly concerned about the high cost of allowing our young people to become sedentary – both in dollars and in lifestyle impacts. Thankfully, statistics over the past few years have demonstrated a slight decline in childhood obesity rates. Maintaining funding for the PEP program can only improve upon this nascent downward trend.

Our nation's schools are balancing multiple priorities, and as their budgets tighten they do everything they can to help our children learn and grow. Unfortunately, physical education is often a casualty of emptying coffers. Yet, as research has consistently shown, physical education and activity are essential for healthy growth and development of our children.

Establishing healthy habits at an early age means children will lead healthier lifestyles in adulthood. Students that participate in physical education are 2.5 times less likely to be sedentary, which pays significant dividends down the road. With obesity-related healthcare costs climbing at a dramatic rate, programs like PEP can help reduce those costs. Studies have also linked physical fitness to improved self-esteem and better performance on standardized tests.

The PEP program is a proven success. In a three-year study of 59 PEP grant recipients, over 98% of PEP awardees said it had a positive influence on the health and fitness level of their students. At a time when we need to do all we can to encourage our children to adopt healthier lifestyles, this is a program that deserves continued investment.

The Carol White Physical Education Program is an important piece of the effort to improve and strengthen school-based physical education around the country. We urge your continued support and leadership to maintain the program with FY 2015 funding.

Sincerely,

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Joseph Crowley  
Member of Congress