



*American Alliance for
Health, Physical Education,
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The Honorable Tom Udall
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC. 20510

Dear Senator Udall,

As organizations that believe strongly in the preventative benefits of health, fitness and well-being, thank you for your commitment to health and wellness, particularly for the millions of children who attend our nation's schools.

We are writing in support of Promoting Health as Youth Skills in Classroom and Life (PHYSICAL) Act, legislative language that would strengthen physical education and health education in students' lives by elevating both subjects to "core subjects" in federal education law. Furthermore, we pledge our continued support of your efforts and will work with you to see that the PHYSICAL Act is included in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

At a time when one-third of our nation's children are overweight or obese, 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. Quality 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.

Physical education increases physical competence, physical activity participation, health-related fitness, social responsibility and enjoyment of physical activity. Quality health education is also essential to support the formation of health-literate and health-conscious adults, and the development of life-long healthful habits that can help reduce the enormous burden of health care costs to this nation. Finally, 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.

Unfortunately, many schools today do not provide adequate physical education or health education, as recommended by leading health-related national organizations and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Subjects that are not considered "core" under the current education law are frequently marginalized and too often eliminated due to a lack of funding or administrative priority, as is shown in the National Association for Sport and Physical Education/American Heart Association [2012 Shape of the Nation Report: Status of Physical Education in the U.S.A.](#) The PHYSICAL Act would help rectify this dangerous trend by recognizing physical education and health education as