

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 5, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
Room H-305, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Republican Leader  
Room H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Republican Leader McCarthy:

As Congress addresses the burgeoning mental health crisis facing our country, we ask that any moving vehicle also include a section dedicated to fostering physical fitness. In the words of Dr. Paul Reed, Director of the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, “What is good for the body is often good for the mind.”<sup>1</sup>

We know that mental health and physical health are closely connected. It is for this reason that we applaud many of the discussions taking place to improve the delivery of mental health ranging from coverage to workforce training. A comprehensive approach, however, needs to take into account the benefits derived (mentally and physically) from exercise as well, especially as it relates to our youth. According to the University of Michigan C.S. Mott Hospital, “nearly 3 in 10 parents (29%) said the cost of school activities is higher than they expected.” The same 2019 study found that the average price to play school sports costs over \$400, annually.”<sup>2</sup>

Rising costs are just one of the barriers confronting families. Earlier this year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued an alarming [report](#) on the increase in sedentary lifestyles, building on the U.S. Surgeon General’s concerns detailed in “[Protecting Youth Mental Health](#)”. Per their findings, it is no surprise that we need more policies in place to make exercise more accessible and affordable. This ranges from school and community-based programs to updating the tax code so that it acknowledges exercise as a form of prevention.

Legislation known as the Personal Health Investment Today (“PHIT”) Act corrects the problem. The proposal (HR 3109) builds on countless medical studies spanning decades confirming the physiological and behavioral effects stemming from exercise.

While one of many mental health solutions, the bill takes an important first step toward incentivizing physical activity. The bill also has a strong track record of bipartisan support in the House, passing by a vote of 277 to 142 in 2018.

Given this history, we urge you to include the PHIT Act in any moving legislative vehicle. Its support is wide-ranging: 4,000 youth-based sports organizations throughout the country; the US Conference of Mayors; all four professional sports league commissioners, including the NFL, MLB, NBA, and the NHL; and countless industry and medical group stakeholders.

In short, if Congress is to set its sights on truly addressing our country’s mental health crisis, then we need to sufficiently acknowledge the role that physical fitness also plays in that equation – for all ages but especially our youth. Thank you for your consideration of this multi-generational win-win. We look forward to working with you on this matter.

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HHS.gov, “Physical Activity Is Good for the Mind and the Body.” December 15, 2021. <https://health.gov/news/202112/physical-activity-good-mind-and-body>

<sup>2</sup> *Mott Poll Report*, “Pay-to-participate: Impact on school activities.” March 18, 2019. Vol.33, Issue 5 <https://mottpoll.org/reports/pay-participate-impact-school-activities>

Sincerely,



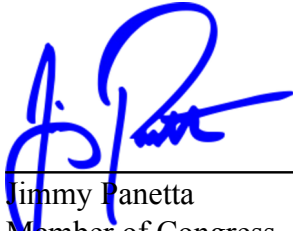
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Ron Kind  
Member of Congress



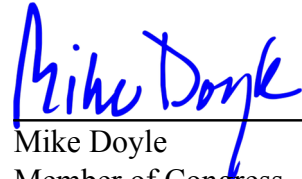
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Mike Kelly  
Member of Congress



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Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



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Mike Doyle  
Member of Congress



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Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress



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Darin LaHood  
Member of Congress



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William R. Timmons IV  
Member of Congress



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Madeline Dean  
Member of Congress



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David G. Valadao  
Member of Congress



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David J. Trone  
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis

Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

Chuck Fleischmann

Charles J. "Chuck" Fleischmann  
Member of Congress

Rodney Davis

Rodney Davis  
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Brian Fitzpatrick

Brian Fitzpatrick  
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Jake LaTurner

Jake LaTurner  
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Kaiali'i Kanele

Kaiali'i Kanele  
Member of Congress

Ed Perlmutter

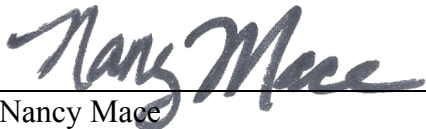
Ed Perlmutter  
Member of Congress

Nanette Diaz Barragán

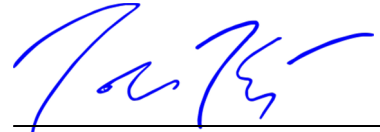
Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress

Jack Bergman

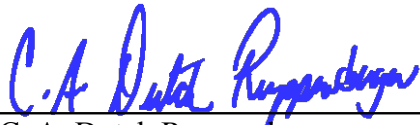
Jack Bergman  
Member of Congress



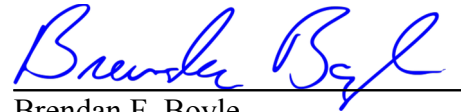
Nancy Mace  
Member of Congress



John Katko  
Member of Congress



C. A. Dutch Ruppertsberger  
Member of Congress



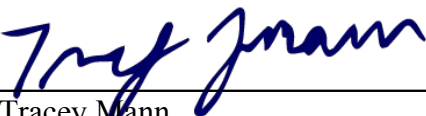
Brendan F. Boyle  
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Mark E. Amodei  
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Angie Craig  
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Tracey Mann  
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Eric A. "Rick" Crawford  
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Jamie Raskin  
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Markwayne Mullin  
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