



August 20, 2010

Atlanta

The Honorable George Miller, Chair
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Bay Area

Chicago

Cleveland

Dear Chairman Miller,

Dallas

DC

Denver

LA

Milwaukee

New England

New York

Seattle

St. Louis

On behalf of America SCORES, I am writing to express my support for H.R. 5504, "Improving Nutrition for America's Children Act." As an after school program in 15 major cities that serves youth in over 200 urban public schools, America SCORES has combined soccer, poetry and service-learning to combat obesity and illiteracy among the country's most disadvantaged children. Urban children are more likely to be overweight, not participate in extracurricular activities, and not have access to gym classes or recess. Additionally, many of these children struggle to read and write at grade level. America SCORES addresses these issues by employing soccer as a building block for teaching academics, social skills, and teamwork. To play on their soccer team, students must commit to literacy workshops every other day in the fall after school and develop a service learning project in the spring. Youth in the America SCORES program translate their teamwork and leadership skills from the soccer field to the classroom and their communities.

The White House recently called obesity "one of the most urgent health issues that we face in this country." According to the Let's Move blog, "Childhood obesity or excess weight threatens the healthy future of one third of American children. [America spends] \$150 billion every year to treat obesity-related conditions..." Therefore, America SCORES applauds you and the Committee for working to reauthorize the federal child nutrition programs that create greater access to healthy meals - before, during, and after school. Specifically, we are pleased that the legislation aims to improve the nutritional value of these meals as children in our country fight to conquer obesity, as well as malnutrition. Additionally, we appreciate that the legislation aims to find synergies between public and private partnerships to reduce childhood hunger and promote community-wide strategies to improve our children's overall health and wellness. These partnerships for wellness grants will likely provide opportunities for youth to gain access to physical activity programs, such as America SCORES.

We thank you for your leadership on childhood obesity and pledge our support to assist you and your staff in seeing this important legislation passed and signed into law. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you need our assistance in moving H.R. 5504 over the goal line!

Sincerely,

Norma Barquet
Executive Director
America SCORES