

February 1, 2019

Staff
Senator
Senator Address

Dear [staff]:

We, the undersigned members and friends of the Outdoors Alliance for Kids (OAK), urge you to support the Every Kid Outdoors Act (EKO), which is included as part of S. 47. This legislation would codify the popular Every Kid in a Park (EKIP) program that supports opportunities for fourth graders and their families to connect with our parks and public lands, at a time when fewer and fewer children are experiencing America's great outdoors.

EKO passed the House of Representatives with overwhelming bipartisan support and was reported out of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee in the last Congress. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) scored the bill at no cost, making it a fiscally responsible legislation. It is imperative that the House make passing EKO in this Congress a priority.

In the program's first year, more than two million fourth graders downloaded the EKIP pass. In addition, during the first two years, nearly \$5 million in private funding was leveraged to support transportation costs for children from low-income schools across America. Many governors appreciate the long-term potential of the program in creating new supporters of parks and are accepting the EKIP passes in their own state park systems. Nevada took it a step further and passed a law to give free entry to all state parks for fifth graders.

OAK is a national strategic partnership of nearly 100 businesses and organizations representing more than 60 million Americans with the purpose of advocating for children and youth to have opportunities to experience the outdoors. Members of OAK have contributed significantly to EKIP's success by providing transportation grants and delivering high quality programming to kids, many of whom are visiting a public park for the first time.

Today's young people are spending less time outdoors than any generation. Yet, America's parks drive an \$887 billion economy, supporting more than seven million jobs across our nation. Outdoor recreation generates nearly \$125 billion in tax revenue and our outdoor economy depends on kids and families accessing natural areas to hike, camp, and fish.

As children spend less time outdoors, they are become more sedentary, which contributes to the chronic disease and childhood obesity crisis. In addition, more than 20 percent, or \$190.2 billion, of annual medical spending in the United States is on health care costs of obesity-related illness. Childhood obesity alone costs our country \$14 billion in direct medical expenses.

EKO is a cost-effective, common sense way to improve children's health, support long-term economic investment, and introduce a new generation to the beauty and wonder of America's public lands, waters, and shores. We urge you to support the Every Kid Outdoors Act as the House considers S. 47 and make connecting our nation's fourth graders and supporting their health a priority.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Advocates for Better Children's Diets	Michael O. D. Brown We Love Our Sons & Daughters Foundation
AEOE (California Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education)	National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity
Alliance for Childhood	National Interscholastic Cycling Association
American Camp Association	National Park Trust
American Council on Exercise	National Recreation and Park Association
American Diabetes Association	National WIC Association
American Heart Association	National Wildlife Federation
American Hiking Society	O'Neill Sea Odyssey
American Horticultural Society	Outdoor Outreach
American Public Health Association	Outdoors Empowered Network
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists	Pathfinder Ranch
Avid4 Adventure	Positively Nourished, LLC
Big City Mountaineers	REI
Blue Star Families	Rhode Island Environmental Education Association
California Invasive Plant Council	Safe Routes to School National Partnership
California State Parks Foundation	Save the Redwoods League
Camp Ocean Pines	Seed Your Future
ChangeScale	Sierra Club
Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education	Ten Strands
Doctors for America	Texas State Alliance of YMCAs
Education Outside	The American Society of Landscape Architects
First Focus Campaign for Children	The Corps Network
Girl Scouts of the USA	The Food Trust
GirlTrek	The Friends of Berkeley Tuolumne Camp
Green Schoolyards America	The North Face
Groundwork Richmond	The Watershed Project
Healthy Schools Campaign	The Wildlands Conservancy
Latino Outdoors	Washington Trails Association
Lawrence Hall of Science	Wilderness Inquiry
	Wyoming Alliance for Environmental Education
	YMCA of San Francisco

Youth Outside