

113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2367

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to carry out programs and activities that connect the people of the United States, especially children, youth, and families, with the outdoors.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 21, 2014

Mr. UDALL of Colorado (for himself, Mr. BENNET, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to carry out programs and activities that connect the people of the United States, especially children, youth, and families, with the outdoors.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Healthy Kids Outdoors
5 Act of 2014”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds as follows:

1 (1) Children today are spending less time out-
2 doors than any generation in human history, as evi-
3 denced by studies that show children enjoy half as
4 much time outdoors today as they did just 20 years
5 ago, while spending more than 7½ hours every day
6 in front of electronic media.

7 (2) The health of our children is at risk as evi-
8 denced by the growing obesity crisis where, in the
9 past 30 years, childhood obesity has more than dou-
10 bled in children and quadrupled in adolescents, cost-
11 ing the economy of the United States billions of dol-
12 lars each year.

13 (3) Our military readiness is declining as nearly
14 1 in 4 applicants to the military is rejected for being
15 overweight or obese, which is the most common rea-
16 son for medical disqualification.

17 (4) Research has shown that military children
18 and families are facing increased stress and mental
19 strain and challenges due to multiple, extended de-
20 ployments. Military family service organizations have
21 developed programs that connect military children
22 and families with positive, meaningful outdoor expe-
23 riences that benefit mental and physical health, but
24 they lack sufficient resources to meet increasing de-
25 mand.

1 (5) In addition to the negative economic impact
2 of childhood obesity, the outdoor retail industry,
3 many local tourist destinations or “gateway commu-
4 nities”, and State fish and wildlife agencies rely on
5 revenue generated when individuals spend time out-
6 doors to create jobs in local communities.

7 (6) Over the past several years, urbanization,
8 changing land use patterns, increasing road traffic,
9 and inadequate solutions to addressing these chal-
10 lenges in the built environment have combined to
11 make it more difficult for many people of the United
12 States to walk or bike to schools, parks, and play
13 areas or experience the natural environment in gen-
14 eral.

15 (7) Spending time in green spaces outside the
16 home, including public lands, parks, play areas, and
17 gardens, can increase concentration, inhibition of
18 initial impulses, and self-discipline and has been
19 shown to reduce stress and mental fatigue. In one
20 study, children who were exposed to greener environ-
21 ments in a public housing area demonstrated less
22 aggression, violence, and stress.

23 (8) Visitation to our Nation’s public lands has
24 declined or remained flat in recent years, and yet,
25 connecting with nature and the great outdoors in

1 our communities is critical to fostering the next gen-
2 eration of outdoor enthusiasts who will visit, appre-
3 ciate, and become stewards of our Nation's public
4 lands.

5 (9) Spending time outdoors in nature is bene-
6 ficial to our children's physical, mental, and emo-
7 tional health and has been proven to decrease symp-
8 toms of attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder,
9 stimulate brain development, improve motor skills,
10 result in better sleep, reduce stress, increase cre-
11 ativity, improve mood, and reduce children's risk of
12 developing myopia.

13 (10) Children who spend time playing outside
14 are more likely to take risks, seek out adventure, de-
15 velop self-confidence, and respect the value of na-
16 ture. A direct childhood experience with nature be-
17 fore the age of 11 promotes a long-term connection
18 to nature.

19 (11) Conservation education and outdoor recre-
20 ation experiences such as camping, hiking, boating,
21 hunting, fishing, archery, recreational shooting, wild-
22 life watching, and others are critical to engaging
23 young people in the outdoors.

1 (12) As children become more disconnected
2 from the natural world, the hunting and angling
3 conservation legacy of America is at risk.

4 (13) Hunters and anglers play a critical role in
5 reconnecting young people with nature, protecting
6 our natural resources, and fostering a lifelong un-
7 derstanding of the value of conserving the natural
8 world.

9 (14) Research demonstrates that hunters who
10 become engaged in hunting as children are among
11 the most active and interested hunters as adults.
12 The vast majority of hunters report they were intro-
13 duced to hunting between the ages of 10 and 12,
14 and the overwhelming majority of children are intro-
15 duced to hunting by an adult.

16 (15) Parks and recreation, youth-serving, serv-
17 ice-learning, conservation, health, education, and
18 built-environment organizations, facilities, and per-
19 sonnel provide critical resources and infrastructure
20 for connecting children and families with nature.

21 (16) It takes many dedicated men and women
22 to work to preserve, protect, enhance, and restore
23 America's natural resources, and with an aging
24 workforce in the natural resource professions, it is
25 critical for the next generation to have an apprecia-

1 tion for nature and be ready to take over these re-
 2 sponsibilities.

3 (17) Place-based service-learning opportunities
 4 use our lands and waters as the context for learning
 5 by engaging students in the process of exploration,
 6 action, and reflection. Physical activity outdoors con-
 7 nected with meaningful community service to solve
 8 real-world problems, such as removing invasive
 9 plants or removing trash from a streambed,
 10 strengthens communities by engaging youth as cit-
 11 izen stewards.

12 (18) States nationwide and their community-
 13 based partners have some notable programs that
 14 connect children and families with nature; however,
 15 most States lack sufficient resources and a com-
 16 prehensive strategy to effectively engage State agen-
 17 cies across multiple fields.

18 (19) States need to engage in cross-sector agen-
 19 cy and nonprofit collaboration that involves public
 20 health and wellness, parks and recreation, transpor-
 21 tation and city planning, and other sectors focused
 22 on connecting children and families with the out-
 23 doors to increase coordination and effective imple-
 24 mentation of the policy tools and programs that a

1 State can bring to bear to provide outdoor opportu-
2 nities for children and families.

3 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

4 In this Act:

5 (1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
6 ty” means—

7 (A) a State; or

8 (B) a consortium from one State that may
9 include such State and municipalities, entities
10 of local or tribal governments, parks and recre-
11 ation departments or districts, school districts,
12 institutions of higher education, or nonprofit or-
13 ganizations.

14 (2) LOCAL PARTNERS.—The term “local part-
15 ners” means a municipality, entity of local or tribal
16 government, parks and recreation departments or
17 districts, Indian tribe, school district, institution of
18 higher education, nonprofit organization, or a con-
19 sortium of local partners.

20 (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
21 the Secretary of the Interior.

22 (4) STATE.—The term “State” means any of
23 the several States, the District of Columbia, the
24 Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States
25 Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Com-

1 monwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, any
 2 other territory or possession of the United States, or
 3 any Indian tribe.

4 **SEC. 4. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT**
 5 **OR IMPLEMENTATION OF HEALTHY KIDS**
 6 **OUTDOORS STATE STRATEGIES.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary is authorized to
 8 issue one cooperative agreement per State to eligible enti-
 9 ties to develop, implement, and update a 5-year State
 10 strategy, to be known as a “Healthy Kids Outdoors State
 11 Strategy”, designed to encourage the people of the United
 12 States, especially children, youth, and families, to be phys-
 13 ically active outdoors.

14 (b) SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OF STRATEGIES.—

15 (1) APPLICATIONS.—An application for a coop-
 16 erative agreement under subsection (a) shall—

17 (A) be submitted not later than 120 days
 18 after the Secretary publishes guidelines under
 19 subsection (f)(1); and

20 (B) include a Healthy Kids Outdoors State
 21 Strategy meeting the requirements of sub-
 22 section (c) or a proposal for development and
 23 submission of such a strategy.

24 (2) APPROVAL OF STRATEGY; PEER REVIEW.—

25 Not later than 90 days after submission of a

1 Healthy Kids Outdoors State Strategy, the Sec-
 2 retary shall, through a peer review process, approve
 3 or recommend changes to the strategy.

4 (3) STRATEGY UPDATE.—An eligible entity re-
 5 ceiving funds under this section shall update its
 6 Healthy Kids Outdoors State Strategy at least once
 7 every 5 years. Continued funding under this section
 8 shall be contingent upon submission of such updated
 9 strategies and reports that document impact evalua-
 10 tion methods consistent with the guidelines in sub-
 11 section (f)(1) and lessons learned from implementing
 12 the strategy.

13 (c) COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY REQUIREMENTS.—
 14 The Healthy Kids Outdoors State Strategy under sub-
 15 section (a) shall include—

16 (1) a description of how the eligible entity will
 17 encourage the people of the United States, especially
 18 children, youth, and families, to be physically active
 19 in the outdoors through State, local, and tribal—

20 (A) public health systems;

21 (B) public parks and recreation systems;

22 (C) public transportation and city planning
 23 systems; and

1 (D) other public systems that connect the
2 people of the United States, especially children,
3 youth, and families, to the outdoors;

4 (2) a description of how the eligible entity will
5 partner with nongovernmental organizations, espe-
6 cially those that serve children, youth, and families,
7 including those serving military families and tribal
8 agencies;

9 (3) a description of how State agencies will col-
10 laborate with each other to implement the strategy;

11 (4) a description of how funding will be spent
12 through local planning and implementation sub-
13 grants under subsection (d);

14 (5) a description of how the eligible entity will
15 evaluate the effectiveness of, and measure the im-
16 pact of, the strategy, including an estimate of the
17 costs associated with such evaluation;

18 (6) a description of how the eligible entity will
19 provide opportunities for public involvement in devel-
20 oping and implementing the strategy;

21 (7) a description of how the strategy will in-
22 crease visitation to Federal public lands within the
23 State; and

1 (8) a description of how the eligible entity will
2 leverage private funds to expand opportunities and
3 further implement the strategy.

4 (d) LOCAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—A Healthy Kids Outdoors
6 State Strategy shall provide for subgrants by the co-
7 operative agreement recipient under subsection (a)
8 to local partners to implement the strategy through
9 one or more of the program activities described in
10 paragraph (2).

11 (2) PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.—Program activities
12 may include—

13 (A) implementing outdoor recreation and
14 youth mentoring programs that provide oppor-
15 tunities to experience the outdoors, be phys-
16 ically active, and teach skills for lifelong partici-
17 pation in outdoor activities, including fishing,
18 hunting, recreational shooting, archery, hiking,
19 camping, outdoor play in natural environments,
20 and wildlife watching;

21 (B) implementing programs that connect
22 communities with safe parks, green spaces, and
23 outdoor recreation areas through affordable
24 public transportation and trail systems that en-

1 courage walking, biking, and increased physical
2 activity outdoors;

3 (C) implementing school-based programs
4 that use outdoor learning environments, such as
5 wildlife habitats or gardens, and programs that
6 use service learning to restore natural areas
7 and maintain recreational assets; and

8 (D) implementing education programs for
9 parents and caregivers about the health benefits
10 of active time outdoors to fight obesity and in-
11 crease the quality of life for the people of the
12 United States, especially children, youth, and
13 families.

14 (e) PRIORITY.—In making cooperative agreements
15 under subsection (a) and subgrants under subsection
16 (d)(1), the Secretary and the recipient under subsection
17 (a), respectively, shall give preference to entities that serve
18 individuals who have limited opportunities to experience
19 nature, including those who are socioeconomically dis-
20 advantaged or have a disability or suffer disproportion-
21 ately from physical and mental health stressors.

22 (f) GUIDELINES.—Not later than 180 days after the
23 date of the enactment of this Act, and after notice and
24 opportunity for public comment, the Secretary shall pub-

lish in the Federal Register guidelines on the implementation of this Act, including guidelines for—

(1) developing and submitting strategies and evaluation methods under subsection (b); and

(2) technical assistance and dissemination of best practices under section 7.

(g) REPORTING.—Not later than 2 years after the Secretary approves the Healthy Kids Outdoors State Strategy of an eligible entity receiving funds under this section, and every year thereafter, the eligible entity shall submit to the Secretary a report on the implementation of the strategy based on the entity’s evaluation and assessment of meeting the goals specified in the strategy.

(h) ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity receiving funding under subsection (a) for a fiscal year—

(1) may use not more than 5 percent of the funding for administrative expenses; and

(2) shall use at least 95 percent of the funding for subgrants to local partners under subsection (d).

(i) MATCH.—An eligible entity receiving funding under subsection (a) for a fiscal year shall provide a 25-percent match through in-kind contributions or cash.

1 **SEC. 5. NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR ENCOURAGING THE PEO-**
2 **PLE OF THE UNITED STATES TO BE ACTIVE**
3 **OUTDOORS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than September 30,
5 2015, the President, in cooperation with appropriate Fed-
6 eral departments and agencies, shall develop and issue a
7 national strategy for encouraging the people of the United
8 States, especially children, youth, and families, to be phys-
9 ically active outdoors. Such a strategy shall include—

10 (1) identification of barriers to the people of the
11 United States, especially children, youth, and fami-
12 lies, spending healthy time outdoors and specific pol-
13 icy solutions to address those barriers;

14 (2) identification of opportunities for partner-
15 ships with Federal, State, tribal, and local partners;

16 (3) coordination of efforts among Federal de-
17 partments and agencies to address the impacts of
18 the people of the United States, especially children,
19 youth, and families, spending less active time out-
20 doors on—

21 (A) public health, including childhood obe-
22 sity, attention deficit disorders and stress;

23 (B) the future of conservation in the
24 United States; and

25 (C) the economy;

1 (4) identification of ongoing research needs to
2 document the health, conservation, economic, and
3 other outcomes of implementing the national strat-
4 egy and State strategies;

5 (5) coordination and alignment with Healthy
6 Kids Outdoors State Strategies; and

7 (6) an action plan for implementing the strat-
8 egy at the Federal level.

9 (b) STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT.—

10 (1) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.—Throughout the
11 process of developing the national strategy under
12 subsection (a), the President may use, incorporate,
13 or otherwise consider existing Federal plans and
14 strategies that, in whole or in part, contribute to
15 connecting the people of the United States, espe-
16 cially children, youth, and families, with the out-
17 doors and shall provide for public participation, in-
18 cluding a national summit of participants with dem-
19 onstrated expertise in encouraging individuals to be
20 physically active outdoors in nature.

21 (2) UPDATING THE NATIONAL STRATEGY.—The
22 President shall update the national strategy not less
23 than 5 years after the date the first national strat-
24 egy is issued under subsection (a), and every 5 years
25 thereafter. In updating the strategy, the President

1 shall incorporate results of the evaluation under sec-
2 tion 6.

3 **SEC. 6. NATIONAL EVALUATION OF HEALTH IMPACTS.**

4 The Secretary, in coordination with the Secretary of
5 Health and Human Services, shall—

6 (1) develop recommendations for appropriate
7 evaluation measures and criteria for a study of na-
8 tional significance on the health impacts of the
9 strategies under this Act; and

10 (2) carry out such a study.

11 **SEC. 7. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND BEST PRACTICES.**

12 The Secretary shall—

13 (1) provide technical assistance to grantees
14 under section 4 through cooperative agreements with
15 national organizations with a proven track record of
16 encouraging the people of the United States, espe-
17 cially children, youth, and families, to be physically
18 active outdoors; and

19 (2) disseminate best practices that emerge from
20 strategies funded under this Act.

21 **SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appro-
23 priated to the Secretary to carry out this Act—

24 (1) \$1,000,000 for fiscal year 2015;

25 (2) \$2,000,000 for fiscal year 2016; and

1 (3) \$3,000,000 for fiscal year 2017.

2 (b) LIMITATION.—Of the amounts made available to
3 carry out this Act for a fiscal year, not more than 5 per-
4 cent may be made available for carrying out section 7.

5 (c) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—Funds made
6 available under this Act shall be used to supplement, and
7 not supplant, any other Federal, State, or local funds
8 available for activities that encourage the people of the
9 United States, especially children, youth, and families to
10 be physically active outdoors.

○