

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 28, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write to urge you to prioritize the inclusion of H.R. 890 the Gym Mitigation and Survival Act (GYMS Act), which would establish a grant program to provide economic support to eligible fitness facilities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as part of any forthcoming recovery or jobs legislation.

As the United States takes steps toward recovery from a disastrous economic and public health crisis, it is imperative that we strengthen and support the means necessary for a full recovery. Our nation's recovery from this dual crisis requires direct support for institutions which promote health and fitness and which can be the first line of defense against chronic diseases and obesity.

America's more than 40,000 fitness facilities serve in this capacity, providing space and programs for more than 70 million Americans to take charge of their health and fitness. While helping to safeguard Americans' health, the industry as a whole contributes more than \$35 billion to the economy and provides work for more than 3.2 million Americans.

For more than a year, fitness facilities across the country have suffered shutdown orders or severe restrictions on their operations. In almost every community, they were among the first to close and the last to open. In 2020, the fitness industry as a whole lost 58 percent of annual revenue, amounting to \$20.4 billion. As of the end of 2020, approximately 1 out of every 5 fitness facilities has closed permanently, with tens of thousands more at risk of closure as well. Most importantly, as a result of shutdown orders, operating restrictions, and permanent closures, 1.4 million Americans working in the fitness industry lost their jobs.¹ While our nation takes steps toward recovery, the damage sustained by fitness facilities across the country has been staggering. The severity of their loss means their recovery will require more time and a specific remedy.

¹ <https://www.clubindustry.com/commercial-clubs/u-s-health-club-revenue-fell-by-58-percent-2020>

The GYMS Act is the necessary remedy to keep America’s fitness facilities in operation. The GYMS Act would establish a program to help struggling fitness facilities by allowing owners to apply for grants from the Small Business Administration (SBA) and use the funds for payroll, rent, mortgage, utilities, insurance, and other expenses fitness facilities normally incur. If enacted, fitness facilities could recoup a percentage of 2019 revenue to replace revenue lost in 2020 due to COVID-19 and mandatory closures. Similar measures to support impacted industries, like the restaurant and live venues industries, were included in previous recovery packages. The GYMS Act has garnered broad, bipartisan support, with 124 members of Congress joining as cosponsors. Recognizing the importance of ensuring Americans can invest in their health and fitness, Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS) introduced the GYMS Act in the Senate on May 13.

Forthcoming recovery or jobs legislation is a critical opportunity to provide support for this essential sector. More than 40 percent of American adults are obese,² approximately 1 in 3 hospitalizations for COVID-19 has been attributed to obesity,³ and 3 in 5 Americans experienced undesired weight changes during shelter-in-place orders.⁴ Direct support to ensure the survival of fitness facilities is a direct investment in the health and fitness of all Americans. The GYMS Act would help fitness facilities recover, so that they can help our nation recover. We urge you to prioritize its inclusion in recovery or jobs legislation.

Sincerely,



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

² <https://www.tfah.org/report-details/state-of-obesity-2020/#:~:text=The%20U.S.%20adult%20obesity%20rate%20stands%20at%2042.4%20percent%2C%20the,by%2026%20percent%20since%202008.>

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/obesity-and-covid-19.html>

⁴ <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2021/one-year-pandemic-stress>