



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

March 1, 2016

Sen. Dante Bartolmeo and Rep. Diana Urban  
State Capitol Building, Room 011  
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: H.B. 5303, AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Dear Sen. Bartolmeo and Rep. Urban:

On behalf of the YMCA of Greater Hartford, I am writing to express our support of H.B. 5303, An Act Concerning Childhood Obesity. As a leader of health and wellness programming in the Greater Hartford community, the YMCA of Greater Hartford fully supports the Connecticut General Assembly's efforts to improve the health of and reduce the obesity rates of children in our community.

As you are aware, childhood obesity rates in the area exceed national trends. According to the City of Hartford's 2012 study entitled "Think Differently for Their Future: Child Weight Surveillance in Preschool in Hartford, Connecticut," 17% of preschoolers included in the study were classified as overweight while 20% were classified as obese. These figures exceed the CDC's classification targets of 10% and 5% respectively.

Given these trends in early childhood obesity, and the comorbid conditions associated with obesity (e.g., diabetes, cancer, and heart disease), the YMCA of Greater Hartford has taken proactive steps to improve the overall health of the children and families we serve. In addition to programming that provides structured physical activity, including our 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Swim program and Hip & Fit extended day program, the YMCA of Greater Hartford has fully adopted the YMCA of the USA's Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) standards in child development programs across our 52-town service area. In fact, our 2014-2017 strategic plan commits to mitigating health disparities by providing 1,000 low income households with access to HEPA each year. These HEPA standards provide our child development programs with guidelines on the nutrition and physical activity that should be provided to each child, including beverages (i.e. making water accessible to children at snacks and meal time), family engagement, food (i.e. fruits and vegetables at every meal or snack), infant feeding, physical activity (i.e. dosage of 60 minutes per day for full-day programs and 30 minutes per day for half-day programs), and screen time.

The YMCA of Greater Hartford is grateful for your efforts to improve the health of children and families across the state, and we look forward to working in partnership with you and other community stakeholders on this vital and lifesaving initiative. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at 860-522-9622 ext. 2306 or by email at [Harold.Sparrow@ghymca.org](mailto:Harold.Sparrow@ghymca.org).

Sincerely,

Harold Sparrow  
President/CEO