

## Redeveloping Urban Areas by Re-investing in Community Recreation



Nearly 80% of the U.S. population lives in urban areas, many of which are suffering from deteriorating community infrastructure, limited green spaces, poor health and chronic disease, as well as juvenile delinquency.

### **Background:**

The Urban Revitalization and Livable Communities Act (H.R. 3734) will invest in the health and well-being of communities across this nation from the standpoint of economic recovery, environmental protection, increased physical activity, as well as providing safe and affordable places for recreation. The Urban Revitalization and Livable Communities Act authorizes \$445 million to be appropriated annually and provided to urban park and recreation agencies through federal assistance grants (which must be matched with local funds). Communities could utilize grants to rehabilitate existing and develop new urban parks and recreational infrastructure. Such rehabilitation and development would revitalize communities by increasing economic development; improving public health; increasing daily physical activity; reconnecting children with nature; reducing crime; and providing safe, healthy alternatives for at-risk youth.

H.R. 3734 focuses on projects in urban areas that provide revitalization through:

- providing more places and spaces for engaging in structured and unstructured physical activity;
- connecting children to the outdoors;
- promoting physical activity;
- connecting to public transportation, schools, and public housing;
- creating green jobs and using green technologies;
- promoting environmental stewardship components such as sustainable landscape features and materials; increased planting of trees; stormwater management and water conservation; and

- using energy efficient components such as energy efficient lighting and HVAC systems.

### **Technical Assistance Grants in H.R. 3734: Rehabilitation Grants**

The rehabilitation grants in the bill will include matching capitol grants to local governments for the purpose of rebuilding and expanding new and existing recreation and facilities

### **Innovation Grants**

The innovation grants in this bill are matching grants for the personnel, facilities, equipment, supplies, and services for urban parks and recreation facilities to address common problems related to facility operations.

### **At-Risk Youth Recreation Grants**

The at-risk youth recreation grants include matching grants for existing programs that have demonstrated success in providing alternative activities to children who are at risk of engaging in criminal behavior and grants for programs in communities with a high prevalence of crime by youth offenders.

### **Recovery Action Program Grants**

Recovery Action Program Grants are matching grants to local governments for local park and recreation recovery action programs, including resource and needs assessment, coordination, citizen involvement and planning, and program development activities to encourage public definition of goals and to develop priorities and strategies for overall recreation system recovery.

### **The Case for Funding Urban Parks**

- Urban parks and recreation facilities play key roles in improving the health of our nation. A study by the CDC found that the creation of or enhanced access to places for physical activity led to a 25.6 percent increase in the percentage of people exercising on three or more days a week;
- The National Youth Violence Prevention reports that students who spend no time in extracurricular activities, such as those offered in after-school programs, more likely use drugs and to become teen parents than are those students who spend one to four hours per week in extracurricular activities.