



**FLORIDA
YOUTH
SOCCER
ASSOCIATION**

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To: Florida Political Leaders
Re: Save Our Sports

Amidst this global pandemic, thousands of Americans are struggling to find work, protect their health, and ensure their family's wellness and security. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every facet of daily life and sport is no exception.

As leaders of our respective sport organizations, we are constantly pursuing ways to better ourselves, and our members, through the innumerable benefits of sports. With millions of American children and their families participating in sports, our efforts significantly impact American society. Study after study shows the benefits of sport are critical to human development and it is our responsibility to advocate for sport as a critical factor for the successful resurgence of our country.

We affirm that it is in our national interest to maintain open access to sports and ensure the survivability of our sports institutions. Not only will millions of jobs be saved, but we can regain the important physical, social and emotional benefits that are lost to haphazard sports and facility closures and shut-downs. Sports help shape who we are by teaching values like perseverance, determination, fair play, work-ethic and the pursuit of excellence. These values can help our country navigate the current challenges we face by emphasizing that we are all on one team working toward one goal...the safety and betterment of all Americans.

In that spirit of unity and teamwork, we must ask why local, state and national government policy makers are not crafting their policies based on input from the organizations that are best equipped to support and defend these decisions? Youth sport organizations across the country are the most experienced and capable groups to support research and analyses that could uniformly guide the development of safe, fact-based Return-to-Play guidelines. Many sport National Governing Bodies are actually empowered by Congress through the Amateur Sports Act to oversee all development activities around their specific sport from pure recreational play to international and Olympic teams.

Government officials are being challenged to make critical decisions in areas that may not be their core expertise. To help, our ask is simple. Invite us to have a seat at the table. Allow us to discuss, share and educate on the positive benefits of sport and why it's needed now more than ever. Let us create together a science-based formula that create benchmark guides for when kids can and can't play. In short, why stop critical youth and adult programming with all of its positive physical, mental, and social impact without seeking out guidance from those who know their market best?

Current federal legislative initiatives have provided temporary financial help during this crisis, but without a plan to provide uniform guidance on a Return-to-Play, many sports organizations will not survive much longer. Varying local, state and federal guidelines have created a fragmented environment that limits organizational effectiveness and the ability to maintain programming and keep doors open. Parents are confused by varying local policies and regulations. Closed doors at athletic facilities, parks and recreation



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centers means lost jobs, missed rents/mortgages, and millions of insecure households. A lack of future preparedness and unification will make any resumption of sports sluggish, and in some communities, non-existent.

Please help us maintain and deploy safe programming, full employment, and open facilities so we can sustain the athletic dreams of millions of Americans. When the GO button is pressed, youth sports can be an essential part of our national rebuilding.

Collectively, we encourage local, state and federal authorities to seek out and leverage the best information to guide their decisions. Reach out to those organizations that understand sport best. We hope you will work collaboratively with us to enact the following common-sense components to pending and future legislation:

These are examples of the elements that we are prepared to address now:

- Creation of a youth sports COVID-19 task force to generate unified federal/state/local standards and guidance for safe sports activity based on collaborative discussions with health professionals, scientists and sports subject matter experts
- Development of uniform, national Return-to-Play guidelines by sport, developed with the full input from their respective sports NGBs, related sports organizations and health and industry experts
- Increased terms for loan repayment from two years to five
- Redirected sporting goods retailer, manufacturer and supplier taxes to a centralized sports grant fund
- Immunity for volunteers who follow established and posted guidelines for safe Return-to-Play but who could be subject to lawsuits

We are confident that our collective organizations, including many national governing bodies, can provide helpful input and guidance for the development of sound, science-based local, state and national government policies. Please reserve a seat the table for any member of our coalition or use our website resources on COVID to help you make the kinds of decisions that could potentially impact nearly 100 million Americans. The future of our country, and the future of our next great generation, depends on it.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

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Executive Director
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SAVE OUR SPORTS CONTACTS & RESOURCES

(LINKS GO TO SPORTS' COVID RESOURCE PAGES)



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SAVE OUR SPORTS CONTACTS & RESOURCES (LINKS GO TO SPORTS' COVID RESOURCE PAGES)



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Visit [**http://bit.ly/SaveOurSportsCoalition**](http://bit.ly/SaveOurSportsCoalition)
and sign the petition asking all politicians
to either include our national sport
organizations in their return-to-play
discussions or use our web-based
resources to chart a logical course.