NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
May 10-11, 2023
Indianapolis, Indiana

Resolution No. 22: Youth Physical Fitness and Wellness
Origin: Committee on Children & Youth
Submitted by: Americanism Commission

WHEREAS, The 1922 National Convention of The American Legion made a commitment to effectively promote the establishment of adequate physical education for all school children of the nation; and

WHEREAS, The 1951 National Convention of The American Legion reaffirmed its responsibility to the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs of children by resolution originated by the Child Welfare Commission; and

WHEREAS, The legacy of our founders and the duties of the former Child Welfare Commission are contentedly assumed by the Americanism Commission; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion today is witness to a national security crisis involving the all-volunteer military service and its efforts to recruit youth for service in the United States Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, Then President-elect John F. Kennedy addressed a similar crisis in an article titled "The Soft American" written in December of 1960 when fifty-one percent of American youth were not eligible for military draft; and

WHEREAS, Global instability, fragile relations with foreign nations, and the advancing economic and military growth of hostile nations demand a powerful military that is fit to fight; and

WHEREAS, The Center for National Defense published a concerning report in 2022 highlighting recruiting challenges; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense reports that as of 2022, only twenty-nine percent of Americans qualify for military service without a waiver; and

WHEREAS, Prominent cultural changes in society, such as the legalization of recreational drugs and increased engagement in sedentary activities like social media and gaming, have proven a deterrent to a healthy lifestyle; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense has found that obesity, adverse criminal history, physical ailments, drug use and failure to complete high school significantly limit the eligible pool of candidates for service; and

WHEREAS, Department of Defense polling reports that a mere eleven percent of sixteen to twenty-one year old Americans indicate a propensity to serve in the military; and

WHEREAS, Congressional testimony of military branch senior enlisted leaders before the Military Personnel Subcommittee in March of 2023 suggests that only nine percent of sixteen to twenty-one year olds are both eligible and indicate a propensity to enlist in the military; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion and its influence on federal and state governments, productive relationships with community leaders and fraternal groups and support for other youth organizations is ideally suited to assist the Department of Defense in addressing this crisis; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2023, That The American Legion reaffirm its dedication to the physical fitness and overall wellness of our nation's youth; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion hereby encourages its officers and its members to actively promote and encourage youth physical fitness activity, health and wellness in the schools and communities they serve; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion endeavor to prioritize youth physical fitness and wellness as a program to be instituted in communities and schools throughout the nation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Americanism Commission provide liaison to federal, state, and local governments and organizations concerned with this effort; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That posts and departments are encouraged to exercise initiative to stimulate outreach and program growth with their community leaders, schools, churches and other youth organizations.