



HEALTH & FITNESS
ASSOCIATION

2025 Advocacy ROI Report

How Strategic Advocacy Protected Fitness
Businesses, Expanded Access, and Put Physical
Activity on the Policy Map

Welcome

The Health & Fitness Association (HFA) is the only non-profit trade association dedicated to protecting, promoting, and growing the health and fitness industry. Through advocacy, research, and education, HFA works to ensure that fitness businesses can operate, grow, and serve their communities while advancing physical activity as a foundational element of public health.

This *2025 Advocacy ROI Report* reflects that mission in action. Advocacy and government affairs are central to HFA's work, and this report highlights how strategic engagement politically at the federal, state, and global levels translates into real value for the industry. While legislative outcomes often draw the most attention, advocacy's true impact is measured in costs avoided, access preserved, credibility earned, and long-term value.

At the federal level, 2025 marked a turning point in ensuring physical activity is firmly embedded in national policy conversations across Congress, the Administration, federal agencies, and healthcare systems. HFA's advocacy helped protect operators from costly regulatory mandates, advance physical activity into Medicare and health data standards, and position the industry as a credible partner in preventive health policy. These efforts were complemented by growing political engagement and national recognition of HFA's leadership, reinforcing the association's influence in Washington.

At the state level, advocacy remained the industry's most immediate line of protection. In 2025, HFA engaged across 23 states on more than 60 bills that would have directly impacted operators. Through early engagement, coalition building, and relationships with policymakers, HFA stopped or amended harmful proposals and advanced proactive policies to expand demand for fitness. As a result, HFA's state advocacy efforts are estimated to have saved US operators between \$25 million and \$60 million in annual costs.

Beyond the United States, HFA also expanded its global advocacy leadership—convening international partners, advancing research to support policy engagement worldwide, and ensuring the industry is aligned and represented in global health and economic policy discussions. Together, these efforts demonstrate how HFA's integrated approach—advocacy informed by research, reinforced through education, and amplified through political and global engagement—delivers meaningful return on investment for the industry.



Liz Clark
President and CEO



Mike Goscinski
Chief of Staff



Charles Regnante
Manager, Government Affairs

Federal Advocacy Report

PUTTING FITNESS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ON THE POLICY MAP

From the Margins to the Center of Federal Health Policy

Federal advocacy is a long-term endeavor, and in 2025, the health and fitness industry crossed a critical threshold in Washington—not defined by a single bill becoming law but by its emergence as a credible, influential voice in federal health policy. Although the Personal Health Investment Today (PHIT) Act did not cross the finish line this year, the scope and pace of federal activity tell a more important story: Fitness is now firmly on the federal policy map, and HFA is driving that shift.

Over the past year, physical activity moved from the periphery of federal health discussions into the center of policymaking across the Administration, Congress, federal agencies, and national standards bodies. This progress reflects sustained, strategic engagement to position fitness as essential infrastructure for chronic disease prevention, economic productivity, and military readiness. Federal advocacy advances incrementally, but 2025 made clear that the foundation is set—and momentum is accelerating.

Shaping the Health Agenda

Following the inauguration of the second Trump Administration, HFA engaged consistently with new leadership at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to align physical activity with the Administration's Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) framework. This engagement elevated fitness as a serious policy lever within federal health strategy, including renewed focus on the President's Council on Sports, Fitness, & Nutrition and renewed attention to national fitness benchmarks and youth health.

Locking in on Physical Activity

HFA's leadership has been central to building durable federal policy infrastructure that extends beyond any single administration. Through the Physical Activity Alliance—where HFA Chief of Staff Mike Goscinski serves on the board and as chair of the Policy Committee—HFA drove introduction of bipartisan legislation to:

- Formalize the regular issuance of federal physical activity guidelines
- Codify the President's Council on Sports, Fitness, & Nutrition in statute

These efforts are designed to embed physical activity into federal law so it endures across political cycles and administrations.



A Breakthrough Moment

The advancement of key components of the PHIT Act marked a pivotal shift. Congress included physical activity language in the House-passed "One Big Beautiful Bill," the first time fitness expenses were formally recognized in a major federal tax package. Although the Senate ultimately removed the provision, its inclusion demonstrated that the policy case has been won, the votes exist, and physical activity is now part of mainstream federal tax and health policy discussions.

Protecting the Business Models

Alongside the Coalition to Save Local Businesses, HFA helped lead the introduction of the American Franchise Act (AFA) in both the House and Senate to protect franchise-based fitness models. The legislation provides clear federal standards by affirming that franchisors are not joint employers absent direct control, supporting investment, job creation, and scalable access to fitness nationwide.

"OPERATING A FRANCHISE SYSTEM DEPENDS ON REGULATORY CLARITY AND CONSISTENCY. HFA'S ADVOCACY—PARTICULARLY AROUND FRANCHISE PROTECTIONS AND STATE-LEVEL MANDATES—HAS HELPED PRESERVE THE BUSINESS MODEL THAT ALLOWS US TO INVEST, GROW, AND BRING FITNESS TO MORE COMMUNITIES. THEIR WORK ISN'T THEORETICAL; IT DIRECTLY AFFECTS WHETHER EXPANSION IS POSSIBLE."

— Brian Tietz, President, Snap Fitness



Major Regulatory Wins

Heading Off Harmful Rules

In 2025, HFA delivered two of the most consequential federal regulatory wins in the association's history—protecting fitness businesses from sweeping, one-size-fits-all rules that would have imposed significant operational costs, compliance risk, and disruption across the industry. These outcomes were not incidental; they were the direct result of sustained, strategic advocacy by HFA on behalf of its members.

FTC Click-to-Cancel Rule Vacated

HFA led the industry's response to the Federal Trade Commission's "negative option" rule, which would have fundamentally altered cancellation and renewal practices for fitness operators nationwide. As originally written, the rule would not have allowed common retention and consumer-friendly options such as membership freezes, step-down plans, or save offers, forcing operators into immediate, no-option cancellations regardless of member preference.

HFA engaged aggressively with the FTC—submitting detailed comments, meeting with agency staff, and coordinating industry feedback to explain how the rule failed to reflect the realities of fitness business models or consumer choice. When the rule moved forward despite those concerns, HFA escalated its advocacy by joining an amicus brief in the federal court challenge, ensuring the fitness industry's perspective was formally before the court. That effort culminated in the US Court of Appeals vacating the rule, preventing costly technology mandates, rigid cancellation requirements, and the loss of consumer-preferred flexibility for operators of all sizes.

Fitness Exempted from FTC Junk Fees Rule

In parallel, HFA led advocacy to ensure that fitness memberships were excluded from the FTC's final "junk fees" rule. Through direct engagement with the Commission, HFA demonstrated that fitness pricing is transparent, recurring, and fundamentally different from the hidden fee practices the rule was intended to address. As a result, fitness was explicitly exempted from the final regulation—preserving existing pricing practices and preventing regulatory overreach.

Together, these victories underscore HFA's role as the trusted, credible voice of the health and fitness industry in Washington and prevented immediate, recurring costs that would have directly affected operators—and the members they serve.



"THE FTC GROSSLY UNDERESTIMATED THE COSTS OF COMPLIANCE. FOR MANY AFFECTED BUSINESSES, THE REAL COSTS OF COMPLIANCE WOULD REACH WELL INTO THE SIX FIGURES, REQUIRING SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES TO BUSINESS PRACTICES, TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS, AND OPERATIONAL PROCESSES."

— Health & Fitness Association Amicus Brief, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit (February 26, 2025)

Securing Tax Certainty

Beyond headline legislation, HFA delivered critical implementation wins. Following enactment of the “One Big Beautiful Bill,” HFA obtained written confirmation from the US Department of the Treasury clarifying that the law’s “no tax on tips” provision applies broadly across the fitness industry. This confirmation ensured that tipped employees, including personal trainers, instructors, spa professionals, and other service-based roles common in fitness facilities, are covered, providing certainty for employers and employees across diverse business models.



Integrating Fitness Into Healthcare

HFA's influence extended into healthcare policy and standards-setting:

- **Medicare Recognition:** For the first time, Medicare was directed to cover a standardized assessment of physical activity as part of preventive care, formally recognizing movement as a clinical health factor.
- **Health Data Standards:** Through HFA and Physical Activity Alliance advocacy, physical activity is now included in national health data systems, making it easier for healthcare providers to recognize and support fitness as part of care.

“PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BEING RECOGNIZED WITHIN PAYER SYSTEMS LIKE MEDICARE IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT LONG-TERM SHIFTS OUR INDUSTRY CAN ACHIEVE. HFA'S WORK IS HELPING MOVE FITNESS FROM BEING VIEWED AS OPTIONAL TO BEING TREATED AS PART OF THE HEALTHCARE SOLUTION. THAT KIND OF PROGRESS CHANGES HOW THE SYSTEM VALUES PREVENTION— AND IT CREATES REAL OPPORTUNITY FOR OPERATORS AND THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE.”

— Chris Craytor, CEO, ACAC Fitness & Wellness Centers

Pushing Back on Tariffs

HFA pushed back on proposals to include fitness equipment under Section 232 steel tariffs, engaging the Administration and the Department of Commerce to highlight the negative impact higher equipment costs would have on fitness operators, consumers, and access to physical activity. HFA emphasized that fitness equipment does not present a national security risk and that imposing tariffs would slow new facility development, delay reinvestment, and undermine the Administration’s MAHA goals by increasing barriers to preventive health.

“TARIFFS ON FITNESS EQUIPMENT HAVE A DIRECT RIPPLE EFFECT ACROSS THE ENTIRE INDUSTRY—FROM MANUFACTURERS TO OPERATORS TO CONSUMERS. HFA HAS BEEN ONE OF THE ONLY ORGANIZATIONS CONSISTENTLY EXPLAINING THESE IMPACTS TO POLICYMAKERS. THEIR LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION ON TARIFFS ARE IN THE INTEREST OF OUR INDUSTRY TO HELP PROTECT SUPPLY CHAINS, MANAGE COSTS, AND SUPPORT INDUSTRY GROWTH.”

— Mark Zabel, President – US Commercial, Matrix

Advancing Transparency in Music Licensing

HFA, through the Music Industry Coalition (MIC), led a push for greater transparency and fairness in music licensing, particularly in how performance rights organizations represent their repertoires and license catalogs to businesses. This advocacy drove congressional calls for the FTC to examine potential unfair or deceptive practices by certain performing rights organizations and to ensure clearer guidance for businesses that play music publicly.



Capitol Hill Action and Washington Recognition

A Show of Force: The Industry United on Capitol Hill

In May, HFA reinforced its advocacy momentum through a successful Fly-In & Advocacy Summit, bringing fitness industry leaders from across the country to Washington, DC. Participants conducted more than 130 meetings with members of Congress and congressional staff, ensuring the industry's priorities were communicated directly to policymakers on both sides of the aisle. Delegations engaged lawmakers on physical activity policy, tax issues, regulatory concerns, and the role of fitness in preventive health, with select meetings extending into the executive branch. The Fly-In demonstrated the industry's growing sophistication, unity, and credibility, translating member engagement into tangible impact on Capitol Hill.

Credibility, Influence, and a Seat at the Table

HFA's growing influence has been independently recognized across Washington:

- HFA President and CEO Liz Clark was named to Washingtonian's list of the 500 Most Influential People shaping policy in the nation's capital.
- Clark and Goscinski were named among The Hill's Top Lobbyists of 2025.
- Goscinski was further recognized as one of just five Top Association Lobbyists in DC this year.
- Clark was named to Washingtonian's list of the Most Influential People Shaping Healthcare Policy.

These recognitions are not about individual accolades but are instead evidence that health and fitness advocacy is now viewed as serious, credible, and consequential by federal policymakers. They reflect the industry's elevated standing and HFA's role in ensuring physical activity has a permanent seat at the policy table.



The Bottom Line: Advocacy That Delivers Today and Builds for Tomorrow

HFA has established itself as a trusted, professional voice in Washington—delivering near-term protections while building a durable policy framework that will shape physical activity policy for years to come.

FitPAC Momentum

EXPANDING THE INDUSTRY'S POLITICAL INFLUENCE

In 2025, FitPAC continued its evolution from a modest political presence into a credible, influential force in Washington. Through increased fundraising, broader participation, and consistent engagement with policymakers, FitPAC strengthened the industry's political standing and reinforced its commitment to supporting champions of physical activity, small business, and public health.

That positioning translated into meaningful action. FitPAC raised more than \$160,000 from 85 industry donors and directed nearly \$110,000 in strategic support to 56 federal candidates—marking a significant expansion in both scale and impact.

Engagement extended beyond fundraising, highlighted by FitPAC's signature event at the UFC Performance Institute during The HFA Show, which brought together more than 40 members for a firsthand look at the performance, science, and professionalism that define today's fitness industry. Together, these efforts signal a fundamental shift in how the industry organizes, invests, and shows up politically—building lasting influence and stronger relationships with policymakers.

Raised:

\$160,000+

Industry Donors:

85

Federal Candidates Supported:

56

Contributed to Campaigns:

Nearly \$110,000



Elevating Fitness With Policymakers

HFA continues to lead the industry in connecting fitness operators directly with state policymakers, elevating physical activity as a public health priority and positioning the industry as a trusted partner in state health policy.

California

HFA convened executives, managers, and trainers from The Bay Club Company, Chuze Fitness, EoS Fitness, and In-Shape Fitness for the largest Physical Activity Month event at the California state capitol in more than two years, supporting a resolution declaring May as California Physical Fitness Month.

Georgia

HFA joined leaders from Orangetheory Fitness, Discover Strength, and OneLife Fitness in a landmark meeting with Governor Brian Kemp and First Lady Marty Kemp, recognizing May as Georgia Physical Activity Month. The engagement also included policy discussions on expanding fitness subsidies through Georgia Access.



State Proclamations: Recognizing Physical Activity Month

HFA successfully secured official gubernatorial proclamations in 15 states recognizing May as Physical Activity Month, elevating physical activity as a bipartisan public health priority.

States issuing proclamations:

Arizona, California, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, Ohio, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, Virginia



Top State Issues and 2025 Results

Sales Tax on Fitness Memberships

Sales tax proposals targeting fitness memberships pose one of the most immediate financial threats to operators. Fitness facilities rely on predictable monthly dues, and many, particularly independent operators, run on relatively thin margins. This makes our industry vulnerable to taxes that treat fitness as discretionary rather than essential to health.

If enacted, sales taxes can cost operators \$10,000–\$100,000 per month per facility, forcing them to absorb costs or raise prices, leading to reduced affordability, suppressed demand, and slowed expansion.

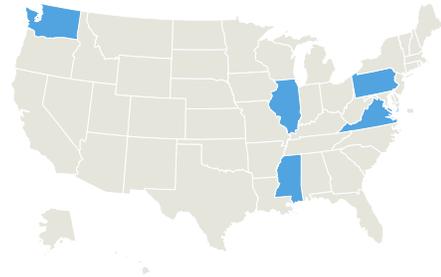
2025 Results

Bills engaged:

5

Bills stopped or amended:

5



States:

Illinois, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington

Click-to-Cancel & Auto-Renewal Mandates

Click-to-cancel (CTC) and auto-renewal bills are often framed as consumer protection, but they frequently impose rigid operational mandates that do not reflect how fitness businesses function. These proposals can require expanded cancellation methods, excessive disclosures, staffing mandates, bonding requirements, and unrealistic processing timelines.

Without intervention, these laws would require new technology investments, added staffing costs (including phone-answering mandates costing up to \$384 per day), increased compliance errors, and heightened litigation risk.

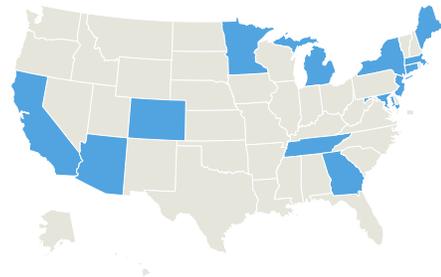
2025 Results

Bills engaged:

28

Bills stopped or amended:

28



States*:

Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Tennessee

*It's common for states to introduce several bills on the same topic in a single session.

Liability Waiver Prohibitions

Liability waivers are a foundational risk-management tool for fitness operators. Legislation that voids or limits their enforceability fundamentally alters the legal environment in which facilities operate, increasing exposure regardless of informed consent or member behavior.

In states where waivers are weakened, operators often experience increased premiums for liability insurance well above inflation and greater litigation frequency, raising costs and discouraging investment.

2025 Results

Bills engaged:

2

Bills stopped or amended:

1



States:

New Jersey, Oregon

"Junk Fee" and Total-Price Mandates

State "junk fee" legislation often requires businesses to advertise a single "total price" to consumers. While this approach is workable in simple transactions, it is incompatible with fitness pricing models that include variable services such as training, recovery, specialty classes, and retail.

When enacted, such mandates can create an untenable compliance position for operators. Even good-faith, transparent pricing disclosures may not shield them from fines or consumer lawsuits.

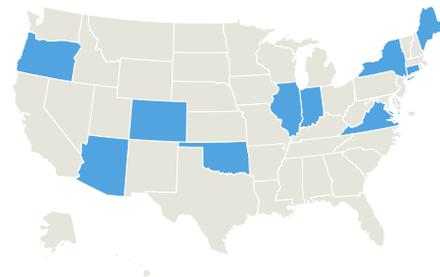
2025 Results

Bills engaged:

11

Bills stopped or amended:

10



States:

Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Virginia

Data Privacy & Biometric Restrictions

Data privacy and biometric legislation increasingly targets technologies used by fitness facilities for secure access and member convenience, including fingerprint scans, mobile check-ins, and wearable integration. Many proposals impose strict limits without accounting for operational realities.

When enacted, such laws can require facilities to replace access systems at costs ranging from thousands to tens of thousands of dollars per location, while increasing administrative burden and compliance risk.

2025 Results

Bills engaged:

6

Bills stopped or amended:

6



States*:

New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania

Independent Contractor Reclassification

Proposals to redefine independent contractor standards present a significant operational risk for fitness facilities that rely on flexible workforce models to deliver services. These bills typically seek to tighten worker-classification rules by expanding the presumption of employment and narrowing the circumstances under which individuals may be treated as independent contractors.

If enacted, these standards can conflict with common industry practices such as engaging independent personal trainers, group exercise instructors, recovery specialists, and wellness professionals. Facility owners could be forced to restructure or eliminate contractor relationships, increasing labor costs and exposing operators to penalties, back wages, and litigation for misclassification, even when arrangements are transparent, voluntary, and clearly documented.

2025 Results

Bills engaged:

2

Bills stopped or amended:

2



States*:

Michigan, Pennsylvania

*It's common for states to introduce several bills on the same topic in a single session.

Cashless Retail Mandates

Cashless retail bans require facilities to accept cash payments regardless of business model. Although these mandates are intended to address equity concerns, they impose significant operational, security, and administrative burdens on fitness facilities that have adopted cashless systems for safety and efficiency.

Accepting cash can add \$5,000–\$10,000 per month in new costs related to equipment, transport, bank fees, theft risk, and staff training.

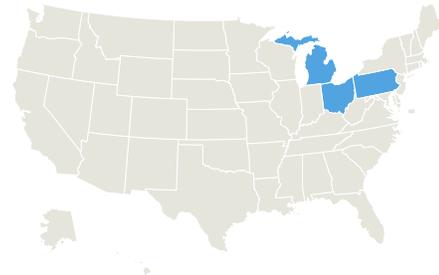
2025 Results

Bills engaged:

3

Bills stopped or amended:

3



States:

Massachusetts, Ohio, Pennsylvania

Cold Spa Regulation

Cold plunge and immersion offerings represent a rapidly growing segment of the fitness and wellness ecosystem. In several states, regulatory frameworks treat them as commercial swimming pools, resulting in requirements that are both technically incompatible and financially unworkable.

Proposed regulations can impose tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars in costs through temperature restrictions, lifeguard mandates, dump-and-refill rules, medical oversight, and construction requirements, effectively eliminating these offerings in many markets.

“NEW RECOVERY AND WELLNESS OFFERINGS ARE BEING REGULATED FASTER THAN THE POLICY FRAMEWORK CAN KEEP UP. HFA’S PROACTIVE WORK ON COLD-SPA REGULATION IS CRITICAL TO ENSURING INNOVATION ISN’T SHUT DOWN BY OUTDATED RULES. HAVING AN ASSOCIATION THAT UNDERSTANDS EMERGING MODALITIES MAKES A REAL DIFFERENCE.”

– Don Dickerson, Vice President, FITNESS SF

2025 Results

Bills engaged:

4

Bills stopped or amended:

3



States*:

California, Illinois, North Carolina

*It's common for states to introduce several bills on the same topic in a single session.

Proactive State Leadership

SHAPING POLICY, NOT JUST RESPONDING TO IT

In 2025, HFA worked proactively with state lawmakers to develop and introduce legislation designed to make fitness more accessible, affordable, and central to preventive health. This forward-looking work focused on aligning tax policy, insurance incentives, and public-safety standards with physical activity—shaping policy conversations before mandates or barriers emerged.

2025 Activity

- Drafting and advancing proposals for fitness membership tax deductions in Ohio and New York
- Working with lawmakers in New York to introduce insurance-based fitness and wellness incentives
- Collaborating with policymakers in Massachusetts on AED modernization and liability protections
- Advancing fitness tax credit proposals for military and reserve members in Pennsylvania

Looking Ahead to 2026

HFA is continuing this work in states where affordability, workforce health, and prevention are top priorities, including California, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Texas—building momentum for policies that expand access and participation in physical activity.



“FOR STUDIO OPERATORS, EVEN SMALL REGULATORY CHANGES CAN HAVE OUTSIZED FINANCIAL IMPACT. HFA’S WORK AT THE STATE LEVEL HAS STOPPED POLICIES THAT WOULD HAVE ADDED REAL MONTHLY COSTS TO OUR BUSINESS. THOSE AVOIDED COSTS MEAN WE CAN KEEP PRICES ACCESSIBLE AND CONTINUE SERVING OUR MEMBERS.”

— Lisa Kuecker, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, StudioGrow



In Focus – California Cold Spas

HFA is proactively advancing a policy framework in California to modernize how cold spas are regulated within fitness facilities. This forward-looking work focuses on establishing a clear statutory pathway that streamlines permitting, aligns regulations with how cold-plunge equipment is actually used in fitness settings, and eliminates requirements designed for public swimming pools.

HFA laid the groundwork in 2025 for legislative action in 2026 that will provide clarity for operators and prevent inconsistent enforcement.



Global Advocacy Report

UNITING THE INDUSTRY AND ADVANCING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
WORLDWIDE

Driving Action on the Global Health Challenge

Physical inactivity is a global public health challenge, with roughly one in three adults worldwide not meeting recommended activity levels. Addressing this crisis requires coordination, credible evidence, and a unified industry voice—especially as policy decisions increasingly influence markets beyond national borders. HFA plays a unique role by convening industry leaders, advancing research, and aligning engagement with policymakers and public health institutions to expand access to physical activity as a public good.

Research to Support Global Policy Engagement

In 2025, HFA released *Reversing the Physical Inactivity Crisis: Fitness Affordability as Strategic Policy*, a landmark research report designed to support advocacy efforts worldwide. The report demonstrates how government action to improve fitness affordability can increase participation, reduce chronic disease burden, and lower long-term healthcare costs—providing a shared evidence base and policy framework adaptable across countries, political systems, and healthcare models.

Convening a Global Advocacy Platform

HFA convened its first-ever Global Advocacy Summit, establishing a dedicated forum for international alignment on physical activity policy. Launched at The HFA Show and expanded to the HFA European Congress, the Summit brought global industry leaders together to share policy priorities, advocacy strategies, and emerging challenges. Ongoing virtual convenings now support continued coordination and alignment around a unified global advocacy agenda.

A Seat at the Global Policy Table

HFA holds a seat at the table in key international policy forums, including ongoing dialogues with the World Health Organization on implementation of the Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018–2030 and engagement with the Business at OECD Health Committee. Through these forums, HFA represents the global health and fitness industry, ensuring the perspectives of fitness operators and employers are included in discussions shaping prevention strategies, health system sustainability, workforce well-being, and the role of physical activity in global health and economic policy.



Thank You to Our Members

The progress outlined in this report is driven by the collective commitment of the Health & Fitness Association's members and industry partners—including exhibitors, sponsors, and advertisers—who invest in a stronger, more unified voice for fitness.

As a non-profit trade association, HFA exists solely to serve the health and fitness industry. Our mission is clear: to protect, promote, and grow the businesses that make physical activity accessible in communities across the country. We fulfill that mission through the engagement and support of the companies that choose to stand behind this work.

Participation in HFA is not passive. It drives results. From stopping costly mandates and securing regulatory clarity to advancing policies that expand access to physical activity, every advocacy outcome reflected here is powered by organizations that recognize the value of collective action.

Your support enables HFA to show up every day on behalf of the industry—at the statehouse, in Washington, and with regulators—so individual businesses don't have to. Together, we are protecting today's businesses, strengthening the industry's standing with policymakers, and building a foundation for long-term growth.

Thank you for your leadership, partnership, and continued investment in the Health & Fitness Association.

**THIS IS THE POWER OF A
UNIFIED VOICE.**

THIS IS ADVOCACY ROI.