

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2009

The Congressional Soccer Caucus

Join us as we “get our kicks” promoting programs and ideas that enrich lives through soccer

Dear Colleague:

We are very pleased to announce the return of the Congressional Soccer Caucus, a bipartisan organization promoting soccer as a vehicle for building communities, developing healthy lifestyles in children, and cultivating leadership and teamwork skills. Soccer continues to grow in popularity:

- Over 16 million Americans of all ages are playing soccer each year;
- Nearly two-thirds of these participants are under the age of 18;
- Two out of every five players are women and girls;
- Last year alone, 20% of all children under the age of 12 played soccer; and
- Over 6 million people attended professional soccer matches and visited sites like the National Soccer Hall of Fame in Oneonta, New York.

In addition to its sporting value, soccer has become a powerful tool in the area of youth development. Kids involved in organized, supervised after-school sports learn the importance of discipline and teamwork, stay active and healthy, and keep off the streets and out of trouble.

The soccer community shows its commitment every day by bringing the public and private sectors together to make a difference in the lives of young people and the neighborhoods in which they live. Throughout the U.S., innovative soccer programs are providing at-risk youth with the opportunity to play and learn. Whether their youth development focus is education, anti-violence, community service or nutrition and healthy lifestyles, these local organizations all share the same goal -- **to use soccer to positively affect the lives of young people in underserved areas.**

The growth of soccer has also created a problem that needs to be addressed – the urgent need for safe places to play. The Congressional Soccer Caucus seeks to meet this need by promoting effective land stewardship and the development of public recreation spaces through legislative efforts such as:

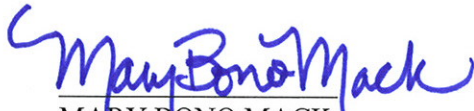
- The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF);
- Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR); and,
- Redevelopment of Brownfields and other blighted commercial sites for public recreational use.

We represent states and regions that are home to hundreds of thousands of soccer players of all ages. In the coming weeks and months, we will bring fun and informative events highlighting the

impact and value of the game of soccer and the interests of the soccer community to your attention. We hope you will join us in this worthwhile effort.

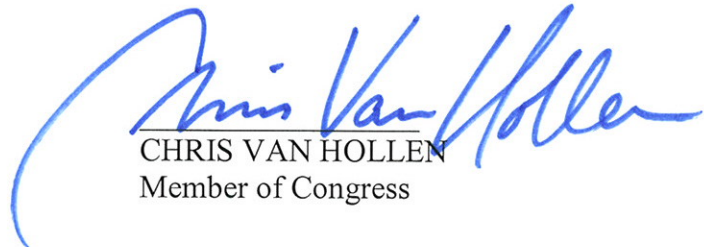
If you believe in these types of programs and want to join us in enriching the lives of families and communities through soccer, please contact Ray Thorn with Rep. Van Hollen (5-5341) or Chris Foster with Rep. Bono Mack (5-5330).

Sincerely,


MARY BONO MACK
Member of Congress


GEORGE MILLER
Member of Congress


DAVID G. REICHERT
Member of Congress


CHRIS VAN HOLLEN
Member of Congress