

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023

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HOUSE BILL 919

Short Title: Pickleball Wellness Initiative: Health Equity. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Roberson, Logan, and A. Baker (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

May 1, 2024

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FUNDS TO NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY FOR A
PILOT PROGRAM IN THE STATE TO INCREASE DIVERSITY IN THE GAME OF
PICKLEBALL.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina the nonrecurring sum of one hundred ninety-six thousand three hundred sixty-two dollars (\$196,362) for the 2024-2025 fiscal year to be allocated to the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management in the College of Natural Resources at North Carolina State University for the creation and testing of a wellness initiative located in eastern Wake, Halifax, and Northampton Counties. The initiative seeks to enhance diversity (Black and Latino) and promote physical and psychosocial well-being through pickleball programs. Northampton and Halifax Counties were chosen because (i) they are among the most economically distressed counties in the State and (ii) a community health assessment conducted in both counties revealed that places to be active was among the top three concerns by residents and community leaders. Eastern Wake County was chosen due to the diverse population and the existence of a new facility built expanding recreation opportunities to address health challenges within that area of Wake County. Multiple studies have shown that pickleball provides important public health benefits across all ages, including meeting (or exceeding) CDC requirements for physical activity, increasing social and community connections, and contributing to psychological well-being. The sport also has the capacity to help with intergenerational connections, enhance critical thinking, reduce social isolation, and facilitate social collaboration. In 2024, Surgeon General Vivek Murthy touted the human health benefits of pickleball on improving loneliness and isolation and improving social and mental health. Currently the sport is underrepresented by people of color despite it having the capacity to be multicultural and socioeconomically inclusive since it has a low cost of entry, high ease-of-play, and is offered through public recreational facilities. This initiative will develop the programs and assess effectiveness using a delayed treatment design. Specifically, this initiative shall consist of the following: (i) interviews with Black and Latino residents to gain insight into how to best create and promote programs aimed to promote wellness and increase equity, (ii) creation of a branded program, including name, logo, and physical and digital marketing materials, (iii) marketing of the program in coordination with community partners, including parks and recreation, churches, and Boys & Girls Clubs, and using websites, social media, direct email, event days, and demonstrations, (iv) six months of weekly pickleball instruction and gameplay, including a delayed treatment control condition, (v) post-program evaluation of physical and psychosocial



1 outcomes, including comparisons of physical activity, social connections, and well-being before
2 and after the program, and (vi) creation of a toolkit used to implement similar programs for public
3 community organizations across the State. Funds appropriated in this section do not revert but
4 remain available to the Department for the purposes provided herein.

5 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2024.