

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023

H.B. 919
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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH30428-MCa-176

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

Sponsors: Representative Roberson.

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO PROVIDE FUNDS TO NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY FOR A
3 PILOT PROGRAM IN THE STATE TO INCREASE DIVERSITY IN THE GAME OF
4 PICKLEBALL.
5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:
6 SECTION 1. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of Governors
7 of The University of North Carolina the nonrecurring sum of one hundred ninety-six thousand
8 three hundred sixty-two dollars (\$196,362) for the 2024-2025 fiscal year to be allocated to the
9 Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management in the College of Natural Resources
10 at North Carolina State University for the creation and testing of a wellness initiative located in
11 eastern Wake, Halifax, and Northampton Counties. The initiative seeks to enhance diversity
12 (Black and Latino) and promote physical and psychosocial well-being through pickleball
13 programs. Northampton and Halifax Counties were chosen because (i) they are among the most
14 economically distressed counties in the State and (ii) a community health assessment conducted
15 in both counties revealed that places to be active was among the top three concerns by residents
16 and community leaders. Eastern Wake County was chosen due to the diverse population and the
17 existence of a new facility built expanding recreation opportunities to address health challenges
18 within that area of Wake County. Multiple studies have shown that pickleball provides important
19 public health benefits across all ages, including meeting (or exceeding) CDC requirements for
20 physical activity, increasing social and community connections, and contributing to
21 psychological well-being. The sport also has the capacity to help with intergenerational
22 connections, enhance critical thinking, reduce social isolation, and facilitate social collaboration.
23 In 2024, Surgeon General Vivek Murthy touted the human health benefits of pickleball on
24 improving loneliness and isolation and improving social and mental health. Currently the sport
25 is underrepresented by people of color despite it having the capacity to be multicultural and
26 socioeconomically inclusive since it has a low cost of entry, high ease-of-play, and is offered
27 through public recreational facilities. This initiative will develop the programs and assess
28 effectiveness using a delayed treatment design. Specifically, this initiative shall consist of the
29 following: (i) interviews with Black and Latino residents to gain insight into how to best create
30 and promote programs aimed to promote wellness and increase equity, (ii) creation of a branded
31 program, including name, logo, and physical and digital marketing materials, (iii) marketing of
32 the program in coordination with community partners, including parks and recreation, churches,
33 and Boys & Girls Clubs, and using websites, social media, direct email, event days, and
34 demonstrations, (iv) six months of weekly pickleball instruction and gameplay, including a
35 delayed treatment control condition, (v) post-program evaluation of physical and psychosocial
36 outcomes, including comparisons of physical activity, social connections, and well-being before



1 and after the program, and (vi) creation of a toolkit used to implement similar programs for public
2 community organizations across the State. Funds appropriated in this section do not revert but
3 remain available to the Department for the purposes provided herein.

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