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The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Office of the Governor
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
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Dear Governor Newsom:

As an infectious diseases clinician scientist and the parent of a child on the competitive rock climbing team at Sender One Climbing, I am writing to advocate for increasing climbing gym capacity within the Blueprint for a Safer Economy tiers.

Not only have California climbing gyms collectively implemented comprehensive and effective safety measures that enable a safe return to rock climbing, but there are important elements specific to rock climbing that enable this sport to be evaluated for greater safe access for California citizens. These include the following:

1. **Solo sport status:** First, climbing is ostensibly a solo sport. There is only one climber allowed on the climbing wall at a time for a given climb. This standardly ensures a greater than 6 foot distance (usually much greater) between persons due to the need to ensure safe clearance in case of a fall and to ensure any lack of interference during the climb. In fact, I recommend that public health consider solo vs. group sports separately in reopening plans since the risk of close contact from a team confers notably different risks than individual sports.
2. **Required masking:** Second, the climbing gyms have instituted a policy of required masking. Universal masking is arguably the single most critical component of protection against SARS-CoV-2 transmission. This sport has mandatory masking for both gym entry and for all gym activities. This is another major difference between climbing gyms and many other indoor sports, including standard exercise gyms.
3. **Required use of alcohol hand rub:** Chalk is an essential component of rock climbing. California climbing gyms have instituted a policy requiring liquid chalk, which is chalk dissolved in 70% alcohol. This effectively ensures that all climbers have sanitized hands when touching a climbing wall. In addition, hand sanitizer is well positioned and widely available throughout the gyms and bathrooms for hand washing are also readily available.
4. **Staff oversight:** Climbing is a high oversight sport with serious attention to safety. Staff are normally attentive to climbing activities to ensure safety, and they have been vocal about encouraging distancing between spotters on the ground and other climbers who are waiting their turn to climb.
5. **Ventilation:** Climbing gyms have extremely high ceilings with a large column of air per

individual due to the nature of the sport. This, in addition to frequent air exchange, enables rapid dilution of any respiratory droplets and promotes a safe exercise environment.

Given the efforts by the medical community to address the obesity epidemic in the U.S., it is important to encourage and facilitate exercise during this pandemic. Solo sports such as rock climbing enable a safe alternative to group sports and should be allowed to increase availability as an important exercise avenue during this time.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan Huang". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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