

Talking to Congress about Afterschool - Sample Script *Afterschool for All Challenge- April 19, 2018*

Use this outline as a guide in your meetings with members of Congress and their staff in talking about afterschool. Next to each section, you may want to jot down the name of the person(s) responsible for covering that point in the meeting.

Most importantly, remember to ask the members you visit to oppose elimination or cuts to 21st CCLC and instead support funding for afterschool through 21st CCLC.

A few last minute tips:

- Be sure to stay on topic and convey the important benefits of afterschool for kids, families and communities.
- Manage the time you are allotted properly.
- Allow everyone to say a few words.
- Offer to follow up with additional information.
- Give and receive business cards.
- Have fun!

Introductions — _____ (name of person covering this point)

The Group Leader should introduce him/herself first, followed by everyone else. State your name, title and organization or affiliation. Those who have brought business cards should give them to staff at the beginning of the meeting.

Thanks for taking the time to meet with us — _____

- Today we're with hundreds of afterschool and summer learning supporters on Capitol Hill and in district offices as part of the *Afterschool for All Challenge*, an event organized by the Afterschool Alliance.
- First of all, thank you for supporting funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Center initiative and the Child Care Development Block Grant in the FY2018 omnibus spending bill.

21st CCLC and CCDBG Ask:

We're here to ask you to build on the success of these investments by supporting funding for 21st CCLC and CCDBG in fiscal year 2019 — _____

- Please increase funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative by \$100 million for FY2019, bringing the total to \$1.3 billion. This amount would allow approximately 100,000 additional children to access quality afterschool, before-school and summer learning programs through school and community based providers in all 50 states and would help address rising expenses associated with hiring and training quality staff.
- We know this is a challenging year and realize you have very difficult decisions to make. In a climate where a vocal few want to eliminate 21st CCLC, we ask supporters like you to make funding 21st CCLC one of your priorities.
- Current funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative covers the costs associated with quality afterschool and summer learning programs for 1.7 million children. However, for every grant awarded at least three eligible grant

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applications are denied due to lack of adequate funding. Instead of eliminating afterschool for almost 2 million students, we should be looking for ways to increase support and open up more opportunities for students.

- The evidence that these programs work is abundant, with decades of research. And, there is strong public support for funding, 83 percent of American voters. In addition, this federal support for afterschool provides an infrastructure which is leveraged by local businesses, nonprofits, partners, volunteers, schools, and others creating between a \$3 return on investment that could not be easily replaced by other supports.

We also encourage your support for an increase of \$2.9 billion for the Child Care Development Fund. This level of funding was agreed to in the Bipartisan Budget Agreement in February 2018.

- Roughly 45 percent of children served through CCDF are school-aged (6-12 years old) and participate in afterschool programs and these necessary funds would allow states to implement with fidelity the updates (such as safety and monitoring) made to the law during reauthorization in December 2014.

Funding for 21st CCLC and afterschool and summer learning programs is critical –

- Every day, 11.3 million children are alone after school and are unsupervised for an average of eight hours per week. Parents of more than 19.4 million youth say their children would participate in a program if one were available in their community.
- *Make afterschool real and relevant:*
 - *talk about how many children are currently served through 21st CCLC in your state/community versus how many are on waitlists or could be served with more funding (see your state fact sheet and listing of 21st CCLC grants, and draw the Member's or staffer's attention to those same materials in the leave behind packet).*
 - *Talk about your program(s). Tell a story about how your program makes an impact in your community with a focus on alignment of programs with the school day.*
 - *Talk about the unmet needs that remain in your community.*
 - *In addition, if you have any of your own evaluation data at the state or local level, be sure to share it.*

CTE Ask -

House: Additionally, we hope that you'll consider co-sponsoring (if not already) or supporting passage of HR 2353 the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act*, bipartisan legislation to strengthen and improve career and technical education (Perkins/CTE).

- The House bill allows funding of school-community partnerships to help middle school and high school students gain the knowledge and skills they need for in-demand jobs including those in the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields.

Senate: Additionally, we hope you will help support a bipartisan reauthorization of the 2006 CTE/Perkins legislation that, similar to HR 2353, takes into account the role and contribution of community partners, the importance of employability skills and programming beginning as early as the 5th grade, and the need for a focus on underrepresented groups in high demand career fields like STEM.

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In the Senate, please support bipartisan CTE legislation. _____

- STEM-jobs span all sectors and trades, from mechanical work, to advanced manufacturing, to construction, and beyond, jobs are increasingly tech-enabled and require a strong foundation in STEM skills.
- Hands-on career and technology education and STEM education that is provided during afterschool and summer learning programs helps expose young people to potential STEM careers and encourages students to pursue STEM as part of their coursework. The more students participate in STEM opportunities after school, the more interested they become in these important subjects (Wai et al 2010).
- Students who participate in high quality afterschool STEM opportunities have increases in positive attitudes and STEM identities, and grow their knowledge about STEM fields and careers. They also exhibit gains in critical 21st century skills such perseverance and critical thinking (Harvard PEAR Institute, 2016).
- With the increased focus on computer science and technology education, afterschool and summer programs are filling a huge opportunity and access gap. 67 percent of principals report offering some kind of school-sponsored club or afterschool computing experience, while only 40 percent report offering programming/coding in formal courses (Google, 2016).
- Furthermore, 75 percent of Nobel Prize winners in the sciences report that their passion for science was first sparked in non-school environments (Friedman & Quinn, 2006).
- Provide examples of how your work is developing students with employability skills (critical thinking, problem solving, communication, leadership); helping expose them to careers options, and preparing them for work with connections to employers, jobs, resume experience etc.

Lastly, please join the Afterschool Caucus - _____

(Check Caucus list first. If the member is already on the Caucus, skip this section and thank them for being on the Caucus.)

- To show your support for afterschool programs, we ask that you *(or your boss, depending on whether you are meeting with a Member or staff member)* join the (House/Senate) Afterschool Caucus and help realize the goal of providing access to afterschool opportunities for all youth.

Reinforce the requests at the end of the meeting — _____

- Please support afterschool by increasing funding for 21st CCLC by \$100 million for FY2019, bringing the total to \$1.3 billion and allowing approximately 100,000 additional children to be served. This will build on the recent investments made by Congress and ensure that our kids have safe and enriching environments to go to after school.
- Study after study has found that quality afterschool programs give students the academic, social and professional skills they need to succeed in school, work and life. There aren't nearly enough afterschool programs across the country to meet the need.

Wrap-up and next steps — _____

- Wrap up the meeting by thanking the staff person or Member again for his or her time.

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- Reference the materials you are leaving with the office in the leave-behind packet and ask who you should contact about scheduling a site visit the next time the Member is at home.
- Mention *Lights On Afterschool* on Oct. 25, 2018, and raise the possibility of your Member participating in your event.
- Offer yourself as a resource any time they are looking for information or a program to visit.

Plan to send a follow up or thank you email after the meeting.

Optional Talking Points that further make the case for 21st CCLC and CCDBG

ADVANCING OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

- Afterschool programs help kids discover what they love to do and build the skills they need to succeed. They provide engaging learning opportunities, opportunities for physical activity, and they give parents peace of mind during the hours after school when juvenile crime peaks. Recent research and evaluations show consistent increases in student achievement and school day attendance. In your folder is a piece outlining recent research about how 21st CCLC afterschool programs positively impact student academics, grades, school day attendance and more.

MILITARY READINESS

- More than 71 percent of young Americans between the ages of 17 and 24 cannot serve in the U.S. military due to reasons related to health, physical appearance, and educational background.
- Afterschool programs are a promising approach to help improve the health and wellness of students, from providing students with access to nutritious foods to promoting healthy habits to keeping students physically fit. According to a recent report by the Heritage Foundation, young people engaged in well-managed academic and extracurricular activities are less likely to commit crimes than their counterparts. Combined with keeping young people safe as well as providing academic enrichment, 21st CCLC and CCDBG funded local afterschool and summer learning programs can help increase the likelihood that more young people are eligible to serve in the military.

SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION AND POSTIVE MENTAL HEALTH

- With a proven track record for increasing resilience, supporting positive youth development, and preventing substance use, 21st CCLC funded afterschool and summer learning programs are a cost-effective way to help build and support an integrated, trauma-informed system that supports children, youth, and families. Afterschool programs keep young people safe and out of harm's way and also instill good-decision-making and connect young people with peer mentors and caring adults.