



Afterschool Alliance

AFTERSCHOOL FOR ALL

November 16, 2009

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, and Education
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor
Health and Human Services, and Education
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David R. Obey, Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services and Education
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services and Education
2441 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Sirs:

As Congress addresses the differences in proposed fiscal year 2010 spending levels for Education programs in the coming weeks, the undersigned organizations urge you to support the existing \$50 million increase in funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLCs) included in the House of Representatives fiscal year 2010 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill.

With the economy slowly regaining its footing, working families are relying even more on afterschool support as they work to keep their jobs, take on more hours, or struggle to feed and afford basic necessities for their children. Parents with afterschool care are more productive at work and miss fewer days. In addition, their children do better in school and are more likely to graduate.

However, the *America After 3 PM* report released last month found that more than a quarter of America's schoolchildren are on their own after the school day ends, a statistic that has risen from 14.3 million (25 percent) in 2004, to 15.1 million (26 percent) today. The same report confirmed that cost, transportation and availability of programs are among the most commonly cited barriers to participation in afterschool programs.

Just when families need their support most – 9 in 10 afterschool programs are being impacted by the economy, resulting in reduced services, increased fees or even shutting their doors. In addition, many of these programs serving low-income children provide not only academic enrichment, but breakfast, snacks and even a hot supper. It is imperative to ensure that these supports, relied on by so many, not only continue to function, but are able to respond to growing demands.



Afterschool Alliance

AFTERSCHOOL FOR ALL

Seven years ago, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization included a bipartisan commitment to quality afterschool programs. Federal funding shortfalls have meant that there are not nearly enough afterschool programs to meet the need, even prior to the current economic crisis. The demand for affordable, quality afterschool experiences far exceeds the availability. Parents of the 18.5 million children (38 percent) not currently participating in afterschool programs say they would enroll their children if a program were available and affordable.

We need to do better for children and parents. Afterschool programs help keep kids safe, improve academic performance and help working families across America. Numerous studies have shown that quality afterschool programs give students the academic, social and professional skills they need to succeed. Students who regularly attend have better grades and behavior in school, better peer relations and emotional adjustment and lower incidences of drug-use, violence and unintended pregnancy.

We appreciate the difficult situation you face with the fiscal year 2010 budget, but we also note that support for federal funding for afterschool is broad, deep, enduring and crosses party and ideological lines. Even in this challenging economy, voters recognize the need to increase support to these critical programs. Please include the House of Representative's \$50 million increase for 21st CCLCs.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Signed:

Afterschool Alliance

After-School All-Stars

Boys & Girls Clubs of America

Children's Defense Fund

Citizen's Schools

Collaborative for Building After-School Systems

First Focus Campaign for Children

Food Research and Action Center

Higher Achievement

National Association for the Education of Young Children

National Collaboration for Youth

National Council of Jewish Women

National PTA



Afterschool Alliance

AFTERSCHOOL FOR ALL

National Women's Law Center

RESULTS

Save the Children

Summer Advantage USA

The After School Corporation (TASC)

YMCA of the USA

Regional, State and Local Organizations

Bay Area Partnership for Children and Youth, California

Blackstone Academy Charter School, Rhode Island

Bridge to Democracy, Rhode Island

Cranston's Community Learning Center, Rhode Island

Delaware AfterSchool Alliance

Georgia Afterschool Investment Council

Highlander Charter School, Rhode Island

John Hope Settlement House at Bridgham Middle School, Rhode Island

Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center, Rhode Island

Met Community School, Rhode Island

Newport Family & Child Opportunity Zone, Rhode Island

Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance

Schools and Community Organized to Promote Excellence, Rhode Island

SOAR (Student Opportunities Afterschool Resources), Rhode Island