



July 15, 2009

The Honorable Phil Hare  
428 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Blaine Luetkemeyer  
1118 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Hare and Luetkemeyer:

On behalf of the millions of children and families served by afterschool programs across the country, we are writing to thank you for introducing H.R.3078, the *Investment in Rural After-School Programs Act of 2009*. The undersigned organizations strongly support this important legislation that provides targeted investments in rural communities' afterschool programs – programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and support working families. Your longstanding support for our goal of making quality, affordable afterschool programs available to all the children and youth that need them is commendable.

As you well know, rural communities across the country face a number of unique challenges. Even in more stable economic times, children in these communities experience the highest rates of poverty and food insecurity, and often face social isolation, lack of positive role models and scarce opportunities. Afterschool programs, building on the strengths of rural communities, are helping to change that – but programs are struggling to meet the need. In a recent survey conducted by the Afterschool Alliance looking at the impact of the recession on afterschool programs, 83 percent of respondents in rural communities say more kids in their community need afterschool, yet nearly half of rural program leaders (46 percent) report that their budget is inadequate to meet the needs of current students and families. In addition, 69 percent of rural afterschool programs report that funding is less than secure for the next 1 to 2 years, and 85 percent report funding is not secure for the next 3 to 5 years.

The *Investment in Rural After-School Programs Act* will enhance afterschool programs in rural communities across the United States by creating a pilot program to establish or improve rural afterschool programs. The bill authorizes funding to help existing rural afterschool programs overcome barriers to service and assist those rural communities that still lack access to afterschool programs. Specifically, program can use funds for

transportation, professional development and training, access to technology, staffing and planning grants, among other things.

Our groups are proud to endorse this legislation. Afterschool programs offer an effective and affordable way of overcoming obstacles confronting rural communities and helping children realize their full potential. We look forward to working with you in the future to translate our common vision of high quality afterschool opportunities for all into a reality.

Sincerely,

Afterschool Alliance

After-School All-Stars

American Association of School Administrators

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

American Heart Association

Association of Educational Services Agencies

Big Brothers Big Sisters

Citizen Schools

Center for Law and Social Policy

First Focus

Food Research and Action Center

MicroSociety

National 4-H Council

National Afterschool Association

National Association of Federally Impacted Schools

National Collaboration for Youth

National Indian Youth Leadership Project

National PTA

National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition  
Organizations Concerned about Rural Education  
Rural School and Community Trust  
RuralVotes  
Save the Children  
School Nutrition Association  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
The Educational Enrichment Initiative  
Voices for America's Children  
YMCA of the USA  
Alabama Youth Justice Coalition, AL  
Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence, AZ  
Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, AR  
California Small School Districts' Association, CA  
Connecticut After School Network, CT  
Delaware AfterSchool Alliance, DE  
Georgia Afterschool Investment Council, GA  
Georgia Rural Urban Summit, GA  
Illinois Center for Violence Prevention, IL  
Indiana Afterschool Network, IN  
Indiana Small and Rural Schools Association, IN  
The Link (Whitewater College Program, Inc.) IN  
Center for Rural & Small Schools - Kansas State, KS

Kansas Enrichment Network, KS

Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership, MA

The After-School Institute, MD

Maine AfterSchool Network, ME

Michigan Small & Rural Schools Association, MI

Missouri AfterSchool Network (MASN) MO

Nebraska Community Learning Center Network, NE

North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs, NC

New Hampshire Recreation and Park Association, NH

PlusTime New Hampshire, NH

The Network for New Jersey's Afterschool Communities, NJ

Rural Education Association of New York State, NY

Oregon Afterschool for Kids, OR

Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools, PA

Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, PA

Youth Alternatives, Inc, PA

Zhang Sah Martial Arts, PA

South Carolina Afterschool Alliance, SC

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Blue Ridge, VA

Bassett Community Center, VA

Blue Ridge Regional Library, VA

Family YMCA of Henry County and Martinsville, VA

Fieldale Community Center, VA

Focus on Youth, VA

MHC After 3, VA

MHC Coalition for Health & Wellness, VA

New College Institute, VA

Patrick Henry Community College, VA

PHCC School of Craft & Design, VA

Piedmont Arts Association, VA

Piedmont Community Services, VA

Spencer Penn Centre, VA

Upward Bound, VA

Virginia Museum of Natural History, VA

School's Out Washington, WA

West Virginia Statewide Afterschool Network, WV