

# Afterschool Advocate

*A media outreach newsletter published by the Afterschool Alliance*

Volume 6, Issue 3, February 8, 2005

## **BUSH PROPOSES JUST \$991 MILLION FOR AFTERSCHOOL**

The Fiscal Year 2006 (FY '06) budget proposal released yesterday by President Bush would allocate just \$991 million for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, which provide grants to afterschool programs serving approximately 1.4 million children across the United States. That is less than half of the \$2.25 billion that was authorized for FY '06 in the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

"The President's budget proposal falls short of meeting our nation's need for afterschool programs," said Afterschool Alliance Interim Executive Director Jen Rinehart. "The afterschool community recognizes that America faces difficult times, but we also know that adequate funding for afterschool is an investment, not a cost. There is a compelling and indisputable need for more afterschool programs in America today. We will ask Congress to support families and communities by increasing funding for afterschool programs next year."

More than 14 million kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup>-graders currently take care of themselves after the school day ends, including almost four million middle school students in grades six to eight. Studies show that these children are at increased risk for becoming involved in gangs, crime, drugs or alcohol, or sexual activity in the hours after school.

In light of this need, support for afterschool programs is widespread. An election-day poll conducted for the Afterschool Alliance found that voters support increased federal funding for afterschool programs, even if it means higher

taxes. Eighty-two percent of voters agreed that 'public officials should increase funding for afterschool programs.' Support crossed all party and demographic lines.

If Congress does not increase the appropriation, the impact of the President's proposal will be felt in communities across the country. The afterschool funding gap it creates would leave some 1.75 million children without the afterschool programs that Congress and the President agreed to in *No Child Left Behind*. If, in addition to the President's cut, Congress again imposes its own across-the-board cut this year, even more afterschool programs would be forced to cut hours or services, or close their doors, Rinehart warned, noting that inflation further depresses the spending power of afterschool dollars.

## **Other Programs Affecting Afterschool**

The Bush budget proposal includes an increase in Title I funding, from \$12.7 billion in FY '05 to \$13.3 billion next year. It would flat fund Child Care and Development Block Grants for the third straight year, eliminate the GEAR UP and TRIO programs altogether, and severely cut Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities and other afterschool funding streams.

The President also proposes to reduce funding for Americorps from \$287.7 million in FY '05 to \$275 million in FY '06. Americorps provides stipends to some 50,000 young people annually for their work at public service organizations, including many afterschool programs.

In his State of the Union address, President Bush discussed a new High School  
*Continued on Page Four...*

## OUTREACH

*Below are a sample letter-to-the-editor and a sample letter to Members of Congress in response to afterschool funding proposals from the President.*

*Most newspapers accept letters by email or through their web sites, in addition to postal mail. To determine your newspaper's policy, check the letters-to-the-editor section of the paper, the web site's letters section (or sometimes the contact section), or just call the paper and ask. Be sure to sign the letter-to-the-editor and include an address and a phone number so that, if your letter is selected for publication, the newspaper staff can confirm that the letter is indeed from you. The newspaper will not print your contact information.*

*Contact information for Members of Congress is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org). Enter your zip code in the "Contact Congress" box located on the left-hand side of the homepage.*

### Letter to Editor

To the Editor:

President Bush's recent budget proposal would leave afterschool programs across the nation with less than half the money promised them in the *No Child Left Behind Act*. The proposal shortchanges children, families and communities that rely on afterschool programs to keep kids safe, help working families, and inspire children to learn. And it is out of step with public sentiment: a recent poll conducted for the Afterschool Alliance found that American voters want an increase in federal funding for afterschool programs, even if it means higher taxes.

Too many children who take care of themselves after the school day ends are at risk of becoming involved in gangs, crime, drugs or alcohol, or sexual activity. The funding gap created by the President's proposal would mean that 1.75 million children across the country will not have the afterschool care promised by *No Child Left Behind*. *[Insert one sentence describing the impact in your community.]*

The afterschool community recognizes that America faces difficult budget choices, but we also know that adequate funding for afterschool is an investment that pays dividends for decades. I urge Congress to fund afterschool at the levels promised in *No Child Left Behind*.

[Your name]

[Your program and affiliation]

[Your address]

[Your daytime and evening phone numbers]

***Letter to Lawmakers follows on Page Three...***

## OUTREACH

### Letter to Lawmakers

Dear [name of lawmaker],

I am writing to ask you to support afterschool programs in [your community or state] and across the nation by working to increase funding for the federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) initiative. President Bush's Fiscal Year 2006 budget proposal of \$991 million for the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC, which funds afterschool programs serving 1.4 million children, is less than half the \$2.25 billion authorized by the *No Child Left Behind Act*. The proposal shortchanges children, families and communities that rely on afterschool programs to keep kids safe, help working families, and inspire children to learn. And it is out of step with public sentiment: a recent poll conducted for the Afterschool Alliance found that American voters want an increase in federal funding for afterschool programs, even if it means higher taxes.

Too many children who take care of themselves after the school day ends are at risk of becoming involved in gangs, crime, drugs or alcohol, or sexual activity. The funding gap created by the President's proposal would leave some 1.75 million children across the country without the afterschool care contemplated in *No Child Left Behind*. *[Insert a sentence or two describing the impact in your community.]*

The afterschool community recognizes that America faces difficult budget choices, but we also know that adequate funding for afterschool is an investment that pays dividends for decades. Families in [your city/town] need afterschool care for our children. The *No Child Left Behind Act* was right to promise \$2.25 billion for the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program in FY 2006, and I urge you to help make this funding level a reality. Thank you for support.

Sincerely,  
[Your name]  
[Your program and affiliation]  
[Your city and state]



---

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization supported by a group of public, private, and nonprofit entities working to ensure that all children and youth have access to afterschool programs by 2010. The Alliance is proud to count among its founding partners the Mott Foundation, U.S. Department of Education, JCPenney Afterschool Fund, Open Society Institute/The After-School Corporation, the Entertainment Industry Foundation and the Creative Artists Agency Foundation.

\* \* \* \* \*

The *Afterschool Advocate* is produced for the Afterschool Alliance by PR Solutions, Inc., Washington, DC;  
Phone: 202/371-1999; Fax: 202/371-9142; E-mail: [advocate@afterschoolalliance.org](mailto:advocate@afterschoolalliance.org).

---

**Budget, Continued from Page One...**

Initiative. His budget proposes \$1.2 billion for targeted interventions for students not performing at the appropriate grade level. "As students reach high school, they are at increased risk for pregnancy, drug use and gang involvement," noted Rinehart. "We hope the President's new initiative will devote resources to high school-based afterschool programs, which can steer teens away from these behaviors."

Congress makes final federal budget decisions, but the President's budget proposal is the starting point for its work. "The Afterschool Alliance will work with parents, educators, religious and business leaders, and concerned citizens to urge lawmakers to increase funding for afterschool programs in FY '06 – because our children need and deserve them," Rinehart said. "Congress was right to promise \$2.25 billion for afterschool in FY 2006, and fully funding afterschool would be the right thing to do now."

**IN THE NEWS...**

**California** – An innovative program in Poway is bringing afterschool opportunities to children at schools, community parks and their own neighborhoods with a "Mobile Rec" traveling van, reports the *San Diego Union-Tribune*. The city-funded vehicle, which offers adult-supervised sports, games, music and crafts, has been particularly popular in areas without adequate playground space, such as mobile home parks in the community.

**Connecticut** – An afterschool program in New Britain has received a grant of more than \$25,000 from the American Savings Foundation, reports the *Hartford Courant*. The Connecticut Pre-Engineering Program, a nonprofit organization that introduces urban students to engineering careers, will use the

funds to conduct the "Team Work – Building Mathematics and Science" program. Participants will design and build models of bridges, solar-powered cars, magnetic levitation vehicles, and roller coasters. Students will also visit industrial facilities, university campuses, and other workplaces that employ science and mathematics.

**Florida** – After months of hard work, afterschool students in Bloomingdale have restored a pond that was once littered with 750 pounds of trash, according to the *St. Petersburg Times*. The children, aged nine to 12, took part in an Adopt-A-Pond program in which participants agree to maintain a pond in exchange for free plants and support from the county. This month, the children will complete the project by planting native species around the pond.

**Florida** – More than 400 runners raised almost \$10,000 for a local afterschool program in a 5K race last month, reports the *Palm Beach Post*. WAY-FM, a nonprofit Christian music station serving South Florida youth, organized the event on behalf of Urban Youth Impact, an organization that provides afterschool programs and mentoring to inner-city youth.

**New York** – Binghamton youth are making friends half a world away through a new pen pal project at the Discovery Center's Kids' Club afterschool program, writes the *Press & Sun Bulletin*. Students began writing to children in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania after a Kenyan teacher at the program placed a request for pen pals in *The Daily Nation*, the largest newspaper in East Africa. Organizers hope the project will deepen their students' understanding of and interest in other cultures.

