

Talking to Congress about Afterschool

Please co-sponsor the bipartisan Afterschool for America's Children Act to incorporate improvements to the 21st CCLC initiative as part of ESEA reauthorization –

- As Congress takes up reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, we support the improvements to the 21st CCLC initiative included in the bipartisan *Afterschool for America's Children Act*, S. 326 and HR 4086.
- The bill:
 - Reauthorizes the 21st CCLC program and supports quality afterschool, before-school and summer learning programs that enhance and complement the school day through engaging, hands-on, learning activities.
 - Builds upon strong partnerships between schools and community- and faith-based organizations through shared data and resources.
 - Promotes professional development and training of afterschool program staff.
 - Encourages innovative ways to engage students that look different from the traditional school day, with an emphasis on hands-on, experiential learning; STEM education; social and emotional learning; and physical activity and nutrition education.
 - Supports individualized learning approaches that provide a variety of ways for students to master core skills and knowledge and gain academic credit for out-of-school-time work.
 - Provides accountability measures that are connected to college- and career-readiness goals and show student progress toward meeting indicators of success, including school attendance, grades and on-time grade level advancement.
 - Maintains current formula grants to states, who then distribute the funds to local communities through a competitive grant process.

Funding for 21st CCLC and CCDF is critical – _____

- Every day 15.1 million children are alone after school and are unsupervised for an average of eight hours per week. Parents of more than 18 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 Member's/staff member'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.***
- Afterschool programs help working families, keep kids safe during the hours after school when juvenile crime peaks, and improve academic achievement. These programs also provide children with physical activity and engage them in their learning.
- As the economy struggles, the need is greater than ever—parents are relying more and more on afterschool programs not only to keep their kids safe, but to help them keep their jobs and to give their kids a nutritious snack or afterschool meal.

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- Meanwhile, it's becoming harder for families to afford afterschool programs or the transportation costs to get there. As programs struggle with state and local budgets cuts and shrinking private donations, programs are being forced to reduce services, increase fees and even shut their doors, just when families need their support most.
- ***If you have youth advocates as members of your group, let them talk about what afterschool means to them and how participation has positively affected them and their families.***

We hope that you'll also support STEM in afterschool and summer learning programs -

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- As Congress reauthorizes the programs that are part of the America COMPETES Act, funding for afterschool and summer STEM programs is integral to federal investments in STEM education. Hands-on STEM education that's provided during out-of-school-time programs helps expose young people to potential STEM careers and encourages students to pursue STEM as part of their coursework.

Lastly, join the Afterschool Caucus - _____
(Check Caucus list first. If the member is already on the Caucus, skip this ask 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 – _____

- We would like to ask you to support the *Afterschool for All Challenge* and work with us to ensure that all children have access to afterschool programs. 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.
- We urge you to support funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers and CCDF and to co-sponsor the *Afterschool for America's Children Act*. 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.
- Please support funding for afterschool, co-sponsor the *Afterschool for America's Children Act* and join the Afterschool Caucus to help us realize the goal of afterschool for all.

Wrap-up and next steps – _____

- Wrap up the meeting by thanking the staff person or Member again for their time.
- Reference the materials you are leaving with them in the leave-behind packet and ask who you should contact about scheduling a site visit the next time the Member is at home. Offer yourself as a resource any time they are looking for information or a program to visit.
- Mention *Lights On Afterschool* on Oct. 23, 2014, and raise the possibility of your Member participating in your event.