

## Talking to Congress about Afterschool - Sample Script *Afterschool for All Challenge- February 7, 2013*

Use this outline as a guide in your meetings with Members of Congress and their staff in talking about afterschool. Next to each point, 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 those you visit to support funding for afterschool and to join the Afterschool Caucus.**

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 and have fun!

Introductions – \_\_\_\_\_

*The Group Leader should introduce him/herself and ask everyone else to do so as well. 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.*

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us – \_\_\_\_\_

- We are joining with thousands of afterschool and summer learning supporters both on Capitol Hill and in District offices today as part of the *Afterschool for All Challenge* organized by the Afterschool Alliance.
- Thank you for protecting funding for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) initiative in the FY2013 Continuing Resolution and for increasing funds for the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) in FY2012.

We urge you to sustain these investments by supporting funding for the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC and CCDF in FY2013 and FY2014 – \_\_\_\_\_

- Current funding covers the cost associated with quality afterschool and summer learning programs for about 1.1 million children. In the context of state and local budget shortfalls, and with over 18 million parents who want afterschool and summer learning programs for their children, additional support is needed.
- For FY2013, we support maintaining current funding or increasing support for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC.
- We also support an increase of \$825 million for the Child Care Development Fund. Roughly one third of CCDF funds go toward afterschool programs for school-age children.
- With regard to the sequester, please do not reduce funding for programs like 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC and CCDF that provide a lifeline for children and their working parents.

Co-sponsor the reintroduction of the bipartisan Afterschool for America's Children Act to incorporate improvements to the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC initiative as part of the ESEA reauthorization process – \_\_\_\_\_

As Congress considers taking up reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), we support the improvements to the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC initiative included in the bipartisan *Afterschool for America's Children Act*. Please co-sponsor the reintroduction of this bill, which does the following:

- Reauthorizes the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program and supports quality afterschool, before-school and summer learning programs that enhance and complement the school day through engaging hands-on, experiential learning activities.

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- 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 in learning that looks different from the traditional school day, with an emphasis on hands-on, experiential learning; science, technology, engineering and math (STEM); social and emotional learning and physical activity and nutrition education.
- Supports approaches that focus on individualized learning 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 over time toward meeting indicators of success including school attendance, grades and on-time grade level advancement.
- Maintains current formula grants to states, the funds from which are distributed to local communities through a competitive grant process at the state level.

### Funding for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC and CCDF is critical – \_\_\_\_\_

- Every day 15.1 million children are alone after school, spending an average of eight hours per week unsupervised. 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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, be sure to share it.*
- Afterschool programs help families work, keep kids safe during the afterschool hours when juvenile crime peaks, and improve academic achievement. These programs 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. Meanwhile, it's becoming harder for families to afford afterschool programs or the cost to transport their children to them, as programs struggle in the face of state and local budgets cuts and shrinking private donations. Programs are being forced to reduce services, increase fees or 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.*

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 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*

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Afterschool Caucus and help make sure the goal of providing access to afterschool opportunities for all youth is realized.

### Reinforce the request 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 in the after school hours. 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*, which is on October, 17 2013, and raise the possibility of your Member participating in your event.