



NEWS RELEASE
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CONTACT: Gretchen Wright
202/371-1999

Bush Budget Proposal Would Shortchange African American Kids

Flat Budget Undermines Children's Safety, Academic Success, Samelson Says

Washington, DC – Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Judy Y. Samelson warned today that President Bush's proposed budget for afterschool programs would "undermine efforts to ensure children's safety and academic success." The proposal would take a severe toll on African American and Latino children, Samelson said. The President's budget calls for \$1 billion for the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative – just half of the \$2 billion his No Child Left Behind Act authorized.

"It's been pointed out over and over that the White House isn't living up to the funding commitments it made in the No Child Left Behind Act," Samelson said. "Sadly, funding for afterschool programs is Exhibit A. The No Child Left Behind bill laid out a roadmap for measured increases in afterschool funding – for slow but steady growth in afterschool in order to meet the huge demand from families. But the President has failed to make good on that commitment."

"The African American community is one of the hardest hit by the failure to adequately fund afterschool. About 350,000 African American children are enrolled in 21st Century-funded programs – about a quarter of all children being served. We believe an equal number of African American children will be left behind after school unless the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative is fully funded."

The 21st CCLC program provides funds to states which, in turn, award grants to school districts and other public and private afterschool providers. If the President's proposal is accepted by Congress, it will mark the fourth consecutive year that funding has been held flat, despite the commitment in the No Child Left Behind Act to increase funding by \$250 million each year through 2007.

Last year the President proposed a 40 percent cut in federal afterschool funding – a cut Congress rejected.

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“Unless Congress rejects the President’s request this year, millions of children and their parents will have to find another way to juggle work, school, learning and safety,” Samelson said. “We urge Congress to once again lead the way in making afterschool the priority the public demands. It’s crucial that Americans who care about afterschool contact their Members of Congress to urge their support for full funding for afterschool. It’s what our leaders promised, and what our children need.”

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization supported by a group of public, private, and nonprofit entities dedicated to ensuring that all children and youth have access to afterschool programs by 2010.