



NEWS RELEASE
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Nation's Top Afterschool Advocate Lauds BiPartisan Legislation Introduced by Senators Boxer, Murkowski & Murray

*Bill Offers "Exactly the Right Approach to
Expanding Afterschool Opportunities," Grant Says*

WASHINGTON, DC – The nation's leading afterschool advocacy organization today applauded United States Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Patty Murray (D-WA) for introducing the "Afterschool for America's Children Act." This bipartisan legislation would strengthen the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative—the nation's chief federal funding stream for afterschool programs—by supporting the innovative advances occurring in before-school, afterschool and summer learning programs.

"This bipartisan legislation is exactly the right approach to making quality afterschool programs available to more of the children and families that need them," said Jodi Grant executive director of the Afterschool Alliance. "Throughout their careers, these three Senators have been extraordinary champions for students, working families and communities. Quality afterschool programs keep children safe, inspire them to learn and support working families, and we need to make it a high priority to ensure that every student has a safe place to go with enriching, educational activities after the school day ends."

At a time when afterschool programs are facing huge financial challenges, the "Afterschool for America's Children Act" makes a commitment to federal afterschool funding, which can be used to leverage state, local, private and philanthropic support. The legislation would:

- Strengthen school-community partnerships to include sharing of data and resources, the ability to better leverage relationships within the community and provide an intentional alignment with the school day.
- Promote professional development and training for afterschool program staff.
- Encourage innovative new ways to engage students in learning that looks different from a traditional school day, with an emphasis on hands-on, experiential learning; science, technology, engineering and math; and – for the first time – physical activity and nutrition education. It supports approaches that focus on individualized learning that provide a variety of ways for students to master core skills and knowledge.

- Provide accountability measures that are connected to college- and career-readiness goals and show student progress over time toward meeting indicators of student success including school attendance, grades and on-time grade level advancement.
- Ensure that funding supports programs that utilize evidence-based, successful practices.
- Increase quality and accountability through parent engagement, better alignment with state learning objectives and coordination between federal, state and local agencies.
- Maintain formula grants to states that then distribute funds to local school-community partnerships through a competitive grant process.

The “Afterschool for America’s Children Act” recognizes the huge unmet need for afterschool programs by ensuring that local communities can make a choice about what afterschool programs best meet the needs of its children and families.

A significant body of research demonstrates that students who attend 21st CCLC afterschool programs regularly are more likely to improve their grades, tests scores and overall academic behavior. More than 15 million school-age children – more than one in four kids in the United States – are unsupervised after the school day ends. The parents of 18 million children say they would enroll their kids in afterschool programs – if programs were available.

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The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.