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Badly Needed Budget Increase for Afterschool a ‘Wise Investment in Our Future, Secured by Bipartisan Support and Grassroots Determination’

Statement of Jodi Grant, Executive Director, Afterschool Alliance

“We welcome today’s announcement that a \$28 million increase for 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) will be included in the FY 2020 budget. The modest increase in funding for afterschool and summer learning programs is a wise investment in our children and our future, secured by bipartisan support and grassroots determination. The bi-partisan deal also includes language honoring long-time afterschool champion and House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita Lowey by adding her name to the program.

After the White House announced its third consecutive attempt to eliminate 21st CCLC, the principal federal funding stream for afterschool and summer learning programs, students, parents, educators and community leaders across the country rallied, reaching out to Congress in tremendous numbers by phone, postcard, letter, email, petition, and social media to remind lawmakers just how vital this funding is to our communities.

The appropriation Congress is expected to pass, and President Trump sign, this week will bring funding for 21st CCLC to a record level of \$1.249 billion. It marks the third consecutive year that Congress has rejected a White House call to eliminate 21st CCLC and instead added funding. Congress backs afterschool programming because it keeps children safe, inspires them to learn, and helps give working parents peace of mind that their children are safe, supervised and learning after the school day ends and until they return home from work. Despite the funding increase, there is a huge unmet demand for afterschool programs in this country, with ten million students unsupervised after the school day ends. It’s well past time for the White House to stop attacking afterschool funding and instead support the kind of significant increase the country needs.

On Capitol Hill, afterschool has earned many committed champions. In addition to Rep. Lowey, we especially thank House and Senate Labor-HHS appropriations leaders for their support for afterschool and summer learning programs, including Reps. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) and Tom Cole (R-Okla.) and Sens. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.).”

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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.