



STATEMENT OF JODI GRANT
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Afterschool Funding Increase Most Welcome & Long Overdue, Nation's Leading Afterschool Advocate Says

“Next year, 100,000 more children in this country will have access to the afterschool programs that keep them safe, inspire them to learn and help working families because Congress passed and President Bush has now signed a \$100 million increase for 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC), the chief federal funding stream for afterschool programs. This is most welcome and long overdue.

After six years of flat-funding and across the board cuts, we are delighted that lawmakers are finally listening to voters, who see a real need for more afterschool programs in this nation. A 2006 election survey found that 72 percent of voters agree that ‘our newly elected public officials in Congress should increase funding for afterschool programs.’ Now they have begun to do so.

But this increase is only a start. The *No Child Left Behind Act* authorized \$2.5 billion for the 21st CCLC in FY 07, but years of freezes and across the board cuts have left programs badly underfunded and millions of children without the safe, supervised after school activities they need. By increasing the 21st CCLC appropriation to \$1.1 billion next year, lawmakers are starting to put the nation back on the road to providing afterschool programs for all children. But at a time when more than 14 million kindergarten through 12th-graders are unsupervised and at risk after the school day ends, we need to do much more to invest in quality afterschool programs. Every child deserves safe, supervised, educational activities after the school day ends.”

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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 by 2010. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.