



NEWS RELEASE
June 6, 2017

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Afterschool Advocates from Alaska to Alabama Call on Congress to Preserve Support for Afterschool, Summer Learning Programs

Washington, D.C. – Afterschool providers, educators, community leaders, parents and youth from 46 states are in Washington, D.C. today and tomorrow to educate members of Congress about the need to preserve funding for the quality afterschool and summer learning programs that keep children safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. The 16th annual [Afterschool for All Challenge](#), sponsored by the Afterschool Alliance, is taking place as Congress begins working on the federal budget for the next fiscal year. The Trump administration proposal to eliminate the [21st Century Community Learning Centers](#) (21st CCLC) initiative, the primary federal funding stream for afterschool and summer learning programs, in Fiscal Year 2018 has sparked opposition in communities large and small across the country.

Hundreds of advocates are also [participating in the Afterschool for All Challenge from home tomorrow](#) by calling their elected officials to discuss the harm that would be caused by ending funding for 21st CCLCs next year.

“With federal funding for afterschool and summer learning programs at risk, it is more important than ever for members of Congress and their staff to hear directly from program providers, parents and young people themselves about the devastating impact eliminating this funding would have on families and communities from coast to coast,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “Quality afterschool and summer learning programs provide safe environments that help children and youth learn and discover their passions while having fun. We need to increase both public and private afterschool funding so all students can take advantage of the opportunities afterschool and summer learning programs provide.”

The highlight of this year’s event is a Capitol Hill showcase, held Tuesday afternoon, featuring remarks from parents from **Fairbanks, Alaska** and **Denton, Md.**; students from **New Hope, Ala. and Lawrence, Kan.**; and a performance by afterschool students from **Takoma Park, Md.** Young people representing afterschool programs in **Washington, D.C.**; **Charlotte, N.C.**; **Columbus, Ohio**; **Hampton and Harrisonburg, Va.**; and **Arcadia, Wisc.** will showcase innovative STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), health and wellness, music and dance afterschool activities they learned at their programs.

During the showcase, Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Representatives Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.), David Cicilline (D- R.I.) and Bobby Scott (D-Va.) will be honored as Afterschool Champions.

The Afterschool Alliance is also presenting the 2017 Dollar General Afterschool Literacy Award to the Columbus State Community College’s ESL Afterschool Communities program, for its

demonstrated excellence in helping develop English language learners' literacy skills at its Southpark and Prairie Norton sites.

Workshops held Tuesday address how afterschool programs can partner on career and technical education; the role of afterschool programs in building students' social and emotional skills; federal and state opportunities in STEM education; strategies to help English language learners succeed; and more.

Participation in afterschool programs has increased to 10.2 million students nationwide, up from 6.5 million in 2004, according to [the America After 3PM household survey](#) of 30,000 U.S. families, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance. But the unmet demand for afterschool programs has increased as well. Today, for every child in an afterschool program, there are two more whose parents say they would participate, if a program were available. One in five students in the country today is unsupervised 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. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.