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Afterschool Leader Lauds Congress for Afterschool and Summer Learning Program Funding in Omnibus Spending Bill

Statement of Jodi Grant, Executive Director, Afterschool Alliance

“Our nation’s children, families, schools and communities will be better off because Congress made a commitment to the next generation and increased funds for afterschool and summer learning programs in the omnibus spending bill that is heading for President Obama’s desk. That bill increases funds for 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) by \$15 million in Fiscal Year 2016. The new appropriation is \$1.167 billion, up from \$1.152 billion in Fiscal Year 2015. This will mean another 15,000 children and youth have safe places to go, with academic and enrichment activities and opportunities for physical fitness, hands-on science learning and more, each afternoon.

The omnibus bill also includes very-welcome language that will restrict the waivers the Department of Education has been issuing, ensuring that 21st CCLC funds will only be used for enrichment and for programs that are open long enough to provide real support to working families during the sometimes-perilous afternoon hours.

In addition, the bill increases funding for Title I, GEAR UP, TRIO, Promise Neighborhoods, the Child Care Development Block Grant, AmeriCorps and STEM, all of which will benefit children by supporting afterschool and summer learning programs.

Afterschool programs keep our children safe, inspire them to learn, and provide invaluable help to working families. When President Obama signs the omnibus budget into law, lawmakers will have provided some much-needed support to the nation’s children and families.

Even with this increase, there is more work to do. One in five students in our country today is unsupervised after the school day ends and [for every child in an afterschool program, two more are waiting to get in](#). We will continue working until all children have access to the quality afterschool and summer learning programs they need and deserve.”

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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.