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Contact: Lisa Lederer
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Trump Administration Proposes Zero Dollars for Afterschool and Summer Learning Next Year. Congress Must Prevent This Catastrophe.

Statement of Jodi Grant, Executive Director, Afterschool Alliance

"The Trump proposal to eliminate dedicated afterschool funding is short-sighted, enormously harmful, and deeply unpopular because it terminates essential supports for children, families, and communities. In a post on the U.S. Department of Education website Friday evening, the Trump administration revealed its FY26 education budget proposal, which would *end* dedicated federal funding for afterschool and summer learning. Unless Congress rejects this devastating proposal, afterschool and summer learning programs in every corner of the country will close and our child care crisis will worsen dramatically. More children and youth will be unsupervised and at risk each afternoon and we will see more academic failures, more hungry kids, more chronic absenteeism, higher dropout rates, more parents forced out of their jobs, and a less STEM-ready and successful workforce.

What was disguised in the 'skinny' budget the Trump administration released earlier is now confirmed. The administration is proposing $0 next year for 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC), which currently supports more than 10,000 local afterschool and summer programs serving nearly 1.4 million children nationwide. Instead, the Trump proposal would collapse 21st CCLC and 17 other education programs into a 'K-12 Simplified Funding Plan' with a 69% reduction in funding for them. Faith-based organizations, nonprofits, universities, parks and recreation departments, libraries, museums, and other non-school providers would be shut out of any afterschool and summer learning grants that survive. It is unclear whether state education agencies would even be able to honor the 21st CCLC three- to five-year grant commitments they have made to local programs.

This map shows the impact of losing 21st CCLC funds on each state.

This Trump administration proposal is wildly unpopular. A public opinion survey released in February finds that 87% of voters, including large majorities of Republicans and Independents and those in rural communities, agree that afterschool programs are 'an absolute necessity.' Four in five Republicans favor greater investments in afterschool programs. Presented with the choice of eliminating or funding federal investments in afterschool and summer learning programs, 86% of Republicans and 88% of Trump voters favor investments.

Yet that is what the Trump administration proposes to end. Many programs are already reeling because the administration terminated $400 million in AmeriCorps funds. Now, the administration is proposing to terminate 21st CCLC funding and stop funding STEM education, youth development, and other federal programs that support afterschool and summer learning, detailed here.

We will mobilize parents, educators, and the overwhelming majority of voters who support afterschool and summer learning to convince Congress to reject the administration's short-sighted, irresponsible proposal and instead continue – and increase – 21st CCLC funding. A vast, powerful body of research confirms the tremendous benefits afterschool and summer learning programs provide, including a study released in May by the esteemed National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

Afterschool and summer learning programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and give working families peace of mind that their kids are safe, supervised and learning when schools are out. When we invest in afterschool and summer learning through 21st CCLC, we are investing in our kids, their future, and our country's success. That is an investment worth making."

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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.