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Senate Appropriations Cut to Afterschool Would Be a 'Big, Damaging Step in the Wrong Direction'

Statement of Jodi Grant, Executive Director, Afterschool Alliance

“A total of 117,000 schoolchildren will lose their afterschool programs if Congress adopts the spending level contained in legislation the Appropriations Committee sent to the Senate floor today. The bill, the FY 2017 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations, includes a \$117 million cut for the [21st Century Community Learning Centers](#) (21st CCLC) initiative, the principal federal funding stream for afterschool and summer learning programs. The proposed cut would be a big, damaging step in the wrong direction.

The bill would provide \$1.05 billion for 21st CCLC, a 10 percent cut from this year’s level of \$1.166 billion. The Every Student Succeeds Act, enacted last fall, marked a critical victory for afterschool programs, as Congress rejected efforts to consolidate 21st CCLC. But it’s equally critical that Congress actually appropriate the funds that schools and community-based organizations need to create and sustain afterschool and summer learning programs and to leverage other funding sources.

According to the [America After 3PM](#) household survey, about 10 million low-income students would participate in afterschool and summer learning programs if not for cost and access barriers. The cuts in this bill could hurt more than 11,000 communities across the nation that rely on 21st CCLC funding to keep students safe, inspire them to learn and support working families.

Although its 21st CCLC provisions are a disappointment, the bill does have important merits. It is bipartisan, and is the first such legislation to pass out of committee in seven years.

The bill allocates only \$300 million for the new Title IV Student Support and Academic Enrichment block grant. Unfortunately, that funding is well below the \$1.65 billion authorized level. The block grant includes support for afterschool STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics).

We urge the full Senate not to cut 21st CCLC funding, and call on the House to support increased funding so that more students and families can benefit from high quality afterschool and summer learning programs. In the days and weeks ahead, we will work hard to mobilize afterschool supporters across the nation to send that message loud and clear.”

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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.