



STATEMENT OF  
Jodi Grant, Executive Director  
Afterschool Alliance on H.R. 5  
Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization Bill

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## **Afterschool Leader Warns that House Education Proposal Could Be ‘Devastating’ for Afterschool Programming for America’s Children**

### *Statement of Jodi Grant, Executive Director, Afterschool Alliance*

“Last week, House Education and the Workforce Committee Chairman John Kline (R-MN) and Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Subcommittee Chairman Todd Rokita (R-IN) introduced the Student Success Act (H.R. 5), which would reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. As currently drafted, the bill consolidates more than 65 education programs, including the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) initiative, the principal federal funding stream for afterschool, into a single grant program.

We believe such consolidation could be devastating for afterschool and summer learning programs across the nation. In fact, it is possible that the new grant structure would provide no resources whatsoever for students outside the school day. As a result, many children would be unsupervised, missing valuable learning opportunities that could help them succeed in school and in life, and without a host of other supports, including nutritious meals and opportunities for physical activity, STEM learning and access to mentors.

Local school systems are already financially strapped, squeezed by budget cuts at all levels of government. Forcing afterschool programs to compete for dollars with other necessary services delivered during the school day would inevitably result in less funding for these essential programs and fewer afterschool opportunities for students. That is precisely why the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC was created as a separate funding stream, and why it continues to be so vital today.

The Afterschool Alliance’s recent nationwide survey of 30,000 households found that the majority of parents support public funding for afterschool programs, and that support crosses party lines. Ninety-one percent of parents who identify as Democrats, 86 percent who identify as Independents and 80 percent who identify as Republicans favor public funding for afterschool programs in communities with few opportunities for children and youth.

Reams of research demonstrate the value of afterschool programs to our children, families and communities. For all these reasons, we urge the full committee to revise H.R. 5 to preserve and adequately fund the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC initiative. We intend to work with members of Congress on both sides of the aisle to ensure that ESEA is reauthorized in a way that protects and expands the afterschool programs that students, working families, communities and the country need.”

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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](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*