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‘A Stunning Blow to Working Families’

Statement of Jodi Grant, Executive Director, Afterschool Alliance

“When the Trump administration proposed eliminating funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) afterschool initiative in its budget blueprint in March, the reaction was swift and resolute:

- More than 1,454 diverse organizations [signed a letter](#) calling on House and Senate appropriators to reject President Trump’s proposal and instead fund 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) at or above its current level of \$1.167 billion.
- Eighty-one members of Congress (twice as many as last year) signed [a bipartisan letter](#) to House Appropriations Committee leaders urging them not to cut afterschool funding.
- [Researchers across the ideological spectrum](#) spoke out about the value of afterschool programs.
- Highly respected institutions posted [new research summaries](#) demonstrating that afterschool programs provide tremendous benefits – as nearly every study has clearly shown.
- A [Quinnipiac national poll](#) found that 83 percent of voters oppose cutting funding for afterschool and summer programs, with just 14 supporting the administration’s position.
- Congress provided [a modest increase in 21st CCLC funding](#) for the remainder of FY2017, enabling 25,000 more students across the nation to participate in afterschool programs.

Today we discovered that the administration either ignored or learned nothing from all that, and instead continues to call for eliminating this essential program in its Fiscal Year 2018 federal budget. If they succeed, it would be a stunning blow to working families, who count on afterschool programs to provide enriching, educational opportunities for their children during the hours after the school day ends and before parents get home from work. Afterschool programs make it possible for many parents to work; losing their afterschool programs would jeopardize their ability to hold onto their jobs.

We intend to continue working with lawmakers on both sides of the political aisle to preserve and grow federal funding for afterschool and summer learning programs, which provide homework help, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education, mentoring, physical activities, healthy meals and snacks, robotics, computer programming, college- and job-readiness, opportunities for hands-on learning and much more.

The administration’s proposal is painfully short-sighted and makes a mockery of the President’s promise to make our country safer and to support inner cities and rural communities alike. The

current federal investment in afterschool is modest, but it is absolutely vital to families and communities across the country, supporting afterschool for [1.6 million](#) children. Still, for every child now in an afterschool program, [two more are waiting to get in](#). At this time when one in five children in this country is unsupervised after the school day ends, we should be investing more in afterschool programs, not cutting the funding we have.

If our children are to learn, if our working families are to prosper, if our workforce is to become more competitive, if our economy is to thrive, if our communities are to become safer, we need many more quality afterschool and summer learning programs in this country. The Trump budget proposal released today would take us in exactly the wrong direction.”

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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.