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President’s Proposal to Eliminate Afterschool Funding Is a ‘Terrible Idea’ that ‘Would Imperil Children and Families’

Statement of Jodi Grant, Executive Director, Afterschool Alliance

“The President’s proposal to eliminate federal funding for afterschool programs is bad for children, bad for families, bad for our education system, bad for our workforce, bad for our economy and bad for America. Zeroing out funds for afterschool programs is short-sighted and dangerous. It ignores decades of research demonstrating the many ways afterschool programs support student success. It betrays millions of families who rely on these programs to keep their kids safe, inspire them to learn and provide parents with peace of mind during the sometimes-perilous after school hours. It is, quite simply, a terrible idea.

Last year, when President Trump proposed eliminating the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative – the chief federal funding stream for afterschool and summer learning programs – parents, educators, business leaders, community organizations and others responded with outrage. Congress listened, rejecting the proposal outright. Today, it seems, the administration learned nothing from that experience, renewing its attack by proposing a cut that would take afterschool programs away from 1.7 million children in Fiscal Year 2019.

That is not what the country wants. A 2017 [Quinnipiac national poll](#) found that 83 percent of voters oppose cutting funding for afterschool and summer programs, with just 14 percent supporting the administration’s position. There is good reason for the overwhelming public opposition to this proposal; it would imperil children and families across the country. Children would be denied safe places in the afternoon that their parents have come to count on. They would lose untold educational opportunities and their parents would lose the security that comes from knowing their children are engaged and learning under the watchful eye of caring adults once the regular school day ends.

As we did last year, we will work with lawmakers on both sides of the political aisle to defeat the proposal, protecting afterschool from this hard-hearted attack. Our country’s current federal investment in afterschool is modest, but crucial to families and communities, providing afterschool to 1.7 million children. But we have miles to go before every child who needs an afterschool program has one. For every child now in an afterschool program, [two more are waiting to get in](#).

We will again mobilize the millions of parents, as well as educators, business leaders, community leaders, law enforcement officials and others who recognize the important work done

in afterschool programs. Our new web page, www.AfterschoolforAmerica.org, is just the beginning. We will defeat this unwise proposal.”

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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.