



For Immediate Release
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2017 Budget Agreement’s Modest Increase in Funding for Afterschool ‘Validates Tremendous Grassroots Outreach by Afterschool Supporters’

Statement of Jodi Grant, Executive Director, Afterschool Alliance

“Two months ago, the country was shocked to see that President Trump’s 2018 budget outline proposed eliminating the 21st Community Learning Centers initiative, the principal federal funding stream for afterschool programs. But last week, Congress approved a modest increase for the current fiscal year, adding \$25 million to program, which will enable an additional 25,000 students across the nation to participate in afterschool programs.

The additional Fiscal Year 2017 funding to support the children, parents and communities that rely on afterschool programs won’t come close to solving the problem of too few afterschool programs to meet the [demand](#). But it is a clear indication that Congress values afterschool and is appropriately resistant to the President’s slash and burn approach to its funding. It also is a welcome and unmistakable validation of the tremendous grassroots outreach by afterschool supporters across the nation, who have sent lawmakers the message that afterschool programs – and the students and families they serve – deserve support.

In response to the President’s 2018 budget proposal, friends of afterschool reached out to Congress with more than 57,000 calls and emails, turned out at town halls in their communities, and prompted more than 1,400 local, state and national organizations to sign a letter in support of 21st Community Learning Centers. Champions of the program on Capitol Hill demonstrated strong support as well, with 81 members of the House coming together across party lines to sign a letter that urged their colleagues to reject the President’s proposal.

That support is grounded in the clear benefits afterschool programs deliver. Afterschool programs keep children safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. From coast to coast, children in afterschool are getting help with homework, developing STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and other skills, participating in team-based learning, being educated about healthy eating and exercise, serving their communities, and much more. They’re doing it all under the watchful eye of caring adults.

We applaud Congress for the badly-needed increase in the 2017 budget and urge members to reject calls to cut or eliminate afterschool funding. While we know the fight over 2018 funding is entirely separate, we take heart in Congress’ recognition in this year’s budget that afterschool programs are too important, too vital, to be cut.”

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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.