



NEWS RELEASE
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CONTACT: Gretchen Wright
202/371-1999

California Representatives Call for Increased Funding for Afterschool Programs

Earlier this month, a group of U.S. Representatives, led by Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), called on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education to increase federal funding for afterschool programs. “Afterschool programs help keep kids safe, reduce crime and drug use, and improve academic performance,” noted Lofgren in a letter co-signed by 16 fellow Democratic Representatives from California.

The Representatives asked that \$2 billion be earmarked to support the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) federal afterschool initiative in the pending 2005 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill. Although the “No Child Left Behind Act” authorizes funding of \$2 billion, President Bush has requested just half that amount for Fiscal Year 2005, which would flat-fund the program for the fourth consecutive year. The 21st CCLC initiative currently funds afterschool programs serving 1.4 million children; full funding would double the number of youth served to 2.8 million.

“I applaud Representative Lofgren’s leadership on behalf of afterschool programs and the children and families who depend on them,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Judy Y. Samelson. “Increased funding is essential if we are to provide access to quality after-school programs for all children. Our recent study, *America After 3 PM*, found that parents of more than 15 million children want but do not have access to afterschool programs for their children. We are a long way from meeting this very real and pressing need.” Funded by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund, *America After 3 PM* is the most in-depth exploration to date of how America’s children spend their afternoons.

Emphasizing that “federal funding for afterschool is supported by nine out of ten Americans,” Rep. Lofgren and her colleagues reminded members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee that “[p]arents want to keep their kids safe and give them the best possible preparation for the future. Unfortunately, not all parents can be home at the end of the day when the final school bell rings. Families in communities throughout the nation are counting on your support.”

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization supported by a group of public, private, and nonprofit entities working to ensure that all children and youth have access to afterschool programs by 2010. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

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