



NEWS RELEASE  
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## **Mayor James Honored as an Afterschool Champion in Washington, D.C.**

### ***Parents, Educators, Students, Afterschool Leaders Urge Congress to Fully Fund Afterschool Programs***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Afterschool Alliance today honored Bladensburg Mayor Walter James for his support for afterschool programs at a breakfast in Washington, DC. The Afterschool Alliance and the National League of Cities’ Institute for Youth, Education, and Families brought together more than 500 city leaders, parents, educators, children, program directors and advocates from around the country for a series of events and meetings with Members of Congress. At the annual *Breakfast of Champions*, the formal kick-off to the day’s activities, the organizations honored a dozen mayors for their ongoing work on behalf of afterschool programs in their communities.

Following the Breakfast, the advocates, including mayors and council members, fanned out across Capitol Hill for more than 200 meetings with Members of Congress and congressional staff.

“Every day, 14.3 million children leave school without a safe place to go,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “In all, more than 15 million kids would participate in afterschool programs, if only they were available. But federal funding shortfalls have squelched the growth of afterschool. We’re here to remind lawmakers that America’s cities – as well as its suburbs and rural areas – need afterschool programs, and are relying on Congress to support them.” The bi-partisan *No Child Left Behind Act* authorized \$2.5 billion for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers afterschool initiative in FY 2007, but funding has fallen far behind authorized levels. If the initiative was funded at *No Child Left Behind* levels, 1.5 million more children would have access to quality afterschool programs.

Other mayors honored at the event included Michael Coleman of Columbus, Ohio; David Cicilline of Providence, Rhode Island; and Glenda Hood, former mayor of Orlando, Florida.

The day’s events also included a rally for afterschool in the Dirksen Senate Office Building, featuring Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Joseph Biden (D-DE), Mike Enzi (R-WY), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Craig Thomas (R-WY).

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

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