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Afterschool Leader Commends Senate for Passing Every Student Succeeds Act, Which Will Strengthen Afterschool Programs

Statement of Jodi Grant, Executive Director, Afterschool Alliance

“Today, when the Senate passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Congress finished its rewrite of the nation’s education policies in a way that protects and strengthens the afterschool and summer learning programs that millions of students and families rely on. Our country’s children and youth will do better, our families will be stronger, and our education system will benefit because this legislation contains provisions that preserve and strengthen afterschool and summer learning programs. Congress has served the nation well.

The nation owes an enormous debt of gratitude to Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Patty Murray (D-WA), who were tireless and highly effective champions for afterschool and summer learning programs throughout the reauthorization process. Senator Murkowski’s amendment in committee – cosponsored by Senators Al Franken (D-MN), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Susan Collins (R-ME), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) – and adopted unanimously, saved afterschool programming for 1.6 million students and incorporated new language that makes the program stronger and better. Because of their work, millions of students will benefit from the quality afterschool and summer learning programs that keep them safe, inspire them to learn and help working families.

Sens. Boxer and Murkowski championed language that is included in ESSA that will strengthen school and community partnerships, encourage programs to engage students in innovative ways, provide important new accountability measures, support parent engagement, provide more funding for STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) learning, and more.

We look forward to President Obama signing this bill – but there is much more work to do. One in five students in our country today is unsupervised after the school day ends and [for every child in an afterschool program, two more are waiting to get in](#). The \$1 billion authorization level in FY2017 is not nearly sufficient to meet the need. We will continue working with Congress, state lawmakers, the philanthropic and business communities, and others until all children have access to the quality afterschool and summer learning programs they need.”

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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.