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More Than 650 Diverse and Powerful Groups Urge ESEA Conferees to Reauthorize 21st CCLC Afterschool Funding

Washington, DC —In an unprecedented show of support for afterschool, before-school and summer learning programs, more than 100 national organizations and 560 state and local groups from all 50 states and the District of Columbia today issued [a letter](#) urging Congress to maintain the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21CCLC) initiative, the principal federal funding stream for before-school, afterschool, expanding learning and summer learning programs.

The letter was sent to Senate Health Education, Labor and Pensions Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA), and to House Education and Workforce Committee Chairman John Kline (R-MN) and Ranking Member Bobby Scott (D-VA). The four are leading efforts to negotiate reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which will require reconciling significant differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill. The letter urges conferees to adopt the language in the Senate bill that authorizes the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative as a separate and specific federal funding stream “to provide the next generation of before-school, afterschool, expanded learning and summer learning programs that keep young people safe, inspire them to learn and support working families.”

National organizations signing the letter include America’s Promise Alliance, American Alliance of Museums, Association of Science-Technology Centers, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Boy Scouts of America, Camp Fire, Food Research Action Center, Girl Scouts of the USA, Lutheran Services in America, NAACP, National 4-H Council, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Center on Time and Learning, National Science Teacher Association, Save the Children, Trust for America’s Health, United Way and YMCA of the USA, among many others.

“This letter reflects the massive grassroots support for 21st CCLC and for the quality afterschool and other out-of-school time programs it supports,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “Across the country, children, families and communities are benefitting every day from these programs, so it’s no surprise that we have this extraordinary show of support from organizations that see the impact first-hand. We need more funding for the afterschool programs that keep our kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families.”

Some 1.6 million children and youth participate in afterschool, before-school and summer learning programs supported by 21st CCLC. The House version of the reauthorization bill would eliminate discrete funding for 21st CCLC.

Even at current levels, federal funding for afterschool programs does not come close to meeting the need. The 2014 “America After 3PM” household survey of more than 30,000 families, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance, found that participation in afterschool programs has increased to 10.2 million students nationwide, up from 6.5 million in 2004. But the unmet demand for afterschool programs has increased as well. Today, for every child in an afterschool program, there are two more whose parents say they would participate, if a program were available. One in five students in the United States today is unsupervised after the school day ends.

The text of the letter along with a complete list of signers is [available here](#).

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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.