



STATEMENT OF  
Jodi Grant, Executive Director  
Afterschool Alliance on  
Senate HELP Committee Vote on the  
Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization

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## **Afterschool Leader Lauds HELP Committee Vote to Save Afterschool Funding**

*Statement of Jodi Grant, Executive Director, Afterschool Alliance*

“The Senate HELP Committee’s vote today to preserve dedicated funding for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers initiative is a huge victory for the nation’s children and families, and a testament to the dedication and leadership of Sens. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Al Franken (D-MN), Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Susan Collins (R-ME), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA).

The Committee’s vote to amend the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act by reinstating 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC is powerful evidence that senators on both sides of the political aisle understand the vital role that high-quality afterschool, before-school and summer learning programs play in the lives of our children, families and communities. Senators rightly concluded that funding for afterschool is essential, and came together to preserve it.

New language in the amendment will allow afterschool funds to be used to provide enrichment activities as part of expanded day programs that add at least 300 hours to the school day. This compromise ensures that expanded day programs tapping into 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds will provide care to students during the hours when parents are at work and students would otherwise be unsupervised; it also provides an opportunity for the high-quality learning experiences that are the cornerstone of quality afterschool programs to reach students in expanded learning programs. This compromise helps us continue serving students already in afterschool and it paves the way for even more champions to work together to expand support and leverage resources so we can reach more students and families with high-quality afterschool activities, whether it be part of a traditional afterschool program, a community school or another model like expanded day.

None of this would have happened without parents and afterschool educators across the nation who rallied to the defense of afterschool funding. They know better than anyone that afterschool programs keep children safe, inspire them to learn, and are a lifeline for working families. And they rose to this challenge by sending a clear message to lawmakers — in personal visits, phone calls, emails, petitions, Twitter storms and more.

That advocacy must continue. Today's victory doesn't mean that afterschool funding is out of danger. Funding must still survive on the Senate floor, and then in a conference committee. The House's version of ESEA reauthorization, which was pulled from floor consideration earlier this year, would eliminate separate funding for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC. If the House reauthorizes the legislation without restoring afterschool funding, the nation's families will have to rely on to a House-Senate conference committee to do the job.

More than 1.6 million children are in afterschool programs across the nation because of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC initiative. They are the winners today. Lawmakers must ensure they continue to have access to high-quality afterschool, before-school and summer learning programs.”

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