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## **Increase in Afterschool Funding Is Powerful Reminder of Strong Congressional Support for Afterschool**

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

“The approval by both houses of Congress of a modest increase in funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) initiative is an enormous victory for children and families across the United States. The FY 2019 budget cycle began with a proposal from the White House to zero out funding for the initiative – a policy that was dead on arrival in Congress because members on both sides of the aisle recognize that quality afterschool and summer learning programs help students succeed in school and in life. It ended today with the President signing a bill that increases funding for the initiative. For afterschool providers and families, and even for the White House, the message is clear: Congress backs afterschool programming because it keeps children safe, inspires learning, and helps give working parents peace of mind.

The appropriation brings funding for 21st CCLC to a record level of \$1.222 billion. It marks the second consecutive year that Congress has rejected a White House call to eliminate 21st CCLC and instead added funding. Plainly, it is time for the White House to recognize that its drive to eliminate afterschool funding is doomed because it is ill-advised and harmful.

Over the past six months, providers, parents, business leaders, law enforcement officials and many others rallied to support afterschool. By the thousands, they reminded Congress that afterschool programs are vital to their communities. Their message resonated with Congress, because so many members have visited afterschool programs, talked with children, parents and providers and, as a result, understand what makes afterschool such a vital part of the lives of children, families and communities.

On Capitol Hill, afterschool enjoys many committed champions. We want to especially thank House and Senate Labor-HHS appropriations leaders for their support for afterschool and summer learning programs, including Reps. Tom Cole (R-Okla.) and Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) and Sens. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.).”

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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).*