



NEWS RELEASE  
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## **Hampton Roads Students Return to Virginia After Sharing Views on Afterschool Programs with Officials in Washington, D.C.**

Washington, D.C. – Five young people from Fort Monroe’s Alternatives, Inc. and Harrisonburg’s On the Road Collaborative afterschool programs met this week with U.S. Senators and Representatives and their aides to discuss the importance of investing in afterschool and summer learning programs for youth. The students came to Washington, DC for the annual Afterschool for All Challenge, organized by the [Afterschool Alliance](#).

On Wednesday, Cierra Hendrix, Matthew Tucker, Marshall Willis, Daniella Gisell Rey and Genesis Lisbeth Robles Serrano shared their experiences and perspectives on afterschool programs with U.S. Rep. Bobby Scott and other members of Congress, emphasizing the ways the afterschool offerings engage young people and broaden their horizons. The students’ trip was in collaboration with the [Virginia Partnership for Out-of-School Time](#) and the Afterschool Alliance.

“This trip was a great experience because I got the opportunity to share what I know, what I’ve done and how great my afterschool program is with my elected officials,” said Heritage High School 10<sup>th</sup> grader Cierra Hendrix.

The Afterschool for All Challenge is an annual event that brings together afterschool program providers and experts, along with students, to showcase some of the innovative activities their afterschool programs provide.

“Students like Cierra speak so eloquently about the kinds of innovative, hands-on learning activities that quality afterschool programs offer students,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “These programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. They help young people discover their passions and have fun while they learn. We need to increase public and private funding so all students can take advantage of the opportunities afterschool and summer learning programs provide.”

Afterschool providers, educators, community leaders, parents and youth from nearly 40 states visited Washington, D.C. this week as part of the Afterschool for All Challenge. Congress will soon begin working on the federal budget for the next fiscal year; President Trump is proposing to eliminate federal funding for afterschool programs in 2018.

Participation in afterschool programs has increased to 10.2 million students nationwide, up from 6.5 million in 2004, according to [the America After 3PM household survey](#) of 30,000 U.S. families, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance. 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 country today is unsupervised after the school day ends.

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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).*