



NEWS RELEASE
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Afterschool Alliance Launches Unprecedented Petition to Save Afterschool Funds

***Parents, Kids, Community Leaders, Educators Tell Congress:
'Don't Deny or Divert Afterschool Funds!'***

As a million people across the country prepare to come together to celebrate the eleventh annual *Lights On Afterschool*, the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs, the Afterschool Alliance today launched an unprecedented petition campaign to give supporters an easy way to tell Congress: "We rely on afterschool programs. Don't deny or divert afterschool funds!"

Participants at the 7,500 *Lights On Afterschool* events around the country on and around October 21, and everyone who supports afterschool programs, are being asked to sign the petition. It urges Congress not to divert already limited 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) dollars to other programs. 21st CCLC is the chief federal funding stream for afterschool, providing grants to local programs that serve more than 1 million children nationwide.

The petition, which supporters can sign onto [online](#), says:

I think quality afterschool, before school, and summer learning programs are tremendously important to working families, children and youth. They provide homework help, mentoring, field trips, hands-on science, art, community service, job preparation, snacks, physical activity, and similar activities that students need – all with supervision so kids are safe when their parents are at work. Please, support children and working families by increasing funding for afterschool programs and by making sure that afterschool funding goes only to after school, before school, and summer learning programs. Thank you!

"In these tough times, it's more important than ever to keep the lights on at the afterschool programs that help working families, keep kids safe and inspire them to learn," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "With federal afterschool funding at less than half of what was authorized under No Child Left Behind, and other funding sources drying up in this recession, this is not the time to divert precious afterschool funds to untested programs. We urge everyone who cares about kids, communities and afterschool to sign on to our petition."

Across the nation, *Lights On Afterschool* events give youth a chance to showcase the skills they learn and talents they develop at their afterschool programs, and to send the message that millions more kids need quality afterschool programs. This year's events will include student

performances, runs and walks, open houses, poetry slams, essay contests, art displays, tree lightings, carnivals, and much more. (A growing list of rallies is available online at www.AfterschoolAlliance.org.)

In support of the event, the Empire State Building will be lit up for the fourth year in a row and this year, for the first time, Mount Rushmore was lit up for a special *Lights On Afterschool* celebration on Saturday.

In advance of *Lights On Afterschool* this year, the Afterschool Alliance released a new special report from *America After 3PM: A Household Survey on Afterschool in America*, the most in-depth study ever to explore how America's children spend their afternoons. This special report, *America After 3PM: From Big Cities to Small Towns*, examines the differences in afterschool participation, satisfaction and demand across rural, suburban and urban communities. Both the *America After 3PM* full report and this new special report are sponsored by JCPenney Afterschool, a charitable organization committed to making life-enriching afterschool programs available to more students and families.

The Afterschool Alliance and JCPenney Afterschool released the latest findings at an event in Des Moines, Iowa on October 12. The report will also reveal city-level data on Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles and New York that will be featured at *Lights On Afterschool* events in those cities later this week.

Actress Rhea Perlman is a spokesperson for *Lights On Afterschool* and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is Founding Chair, a position he has held since 2001.

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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.