

March 29, 2012

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human  
Services, and Education  
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
and Education  
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Shelby:

We urge you to maintain a significant investment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) Program in the fiscal year 2013 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Today, families are relying more than ever on afterschool and summer learning supports as they work to keep their jobs, take on more hours, or provide their children with basic necessities. Parents with afterschool supports are more productive at work and miss fewer days, and their children do better in school and are more likely to graduate high school.

Unfortunately, there are not nearly enough afterschool and summer learning programs to meet the need. The demand for affordable, quality afterschool experiences far exceeds the availability. The 2009 report, *America After 3PM*, found that more than 18 million children have parents who would like to enroll their child in an afterschool program but can't find one available

Afterschool programs help keep kids safe, improve academic performance and help working families across America. Numerous studies have shown that quality programs give students the academic, social and professional skills they need to succeed. Students who regularly attend have better grades and behavior in school, better peer relations and emotional adjustment and lower incidences of drug-use, violence and unintended pregnancy.

Support for afterschool is broad, deep, enduring and bipartisan. Even in this challenging economy, Americans recognize the need to increase support to these critical programs. We appreciate the challenging situation you face with the fiscal year 2013 appropriations bills, and thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,