

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 10, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

We write to express our deep concern and opposition to the inclusion of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program (21st CCLC) as part of the proposed Title IV block grant in the current effort to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

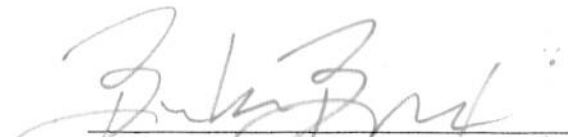
Today, the 21st CCLC program supports afterschool programs that provide safe and enriching environments for over 1.6 million children when the school day ends. These high quality programs complement the continually narrowing school day curriculum and have been shown to improve children's academic performance. They also ensure that vulnerable and at-risk children and youth have safe, supervised places to be after the school day ends.


The current proposal to consolidate programs within Title IV would risk most, if not all, of afterschool funding being redirected to programming within the school day. After a decade of steady increase, the number of children who are unsupervised after school finally saw a decrease from 15.1 million to 11.3 million from 2009 to 2014. Without a dedicated funding stream for afterschool, we risk undoing this major progress. Students will lose out on essential learning opportunities, working parents will struggle to find adequate supervision for their children during the workday, and juvenile crime, drug use, and other inappropriate behaviors will likely increase.


It is not only important that afterschool programs maintain a dedicated funding stream, but that the 21st CCLC program be maintained. For over fifteen years, the 21st CCLC program has fostered valuable partnerships between school day educators, faith-based institutions, community based organizations, businesses and other organizations; encouraged and ensured quality programming; allowed parents to concentrate on their jobs instead of worrying what trouble their children might get into; reduced juvenile crime and risky behaviors; and targeted funding at the neediest children. We strongly urge you to work with us to preserve, strengthen, and reauthorize the 21st CCLC.


We appreciate your leadership in trying to improve education in our country and look forward to working with you to reform the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and to protect and promote programs that work.

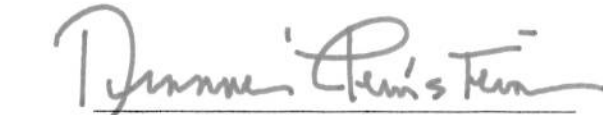
Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

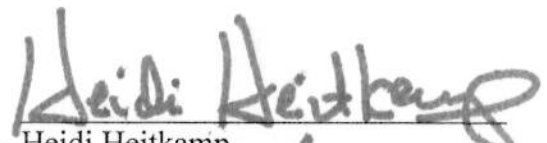

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

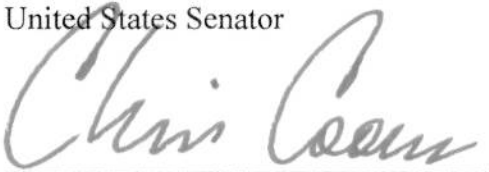

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

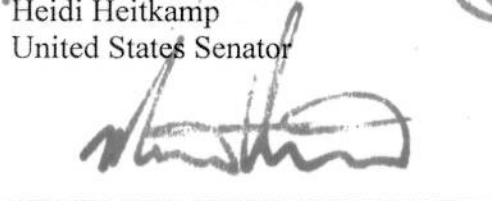

Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator

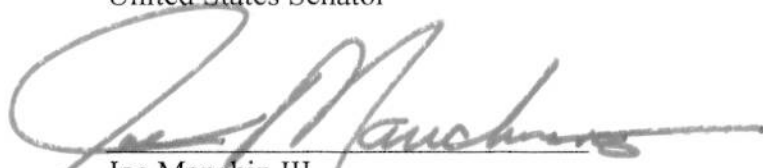

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Tom Udall
United States Senator

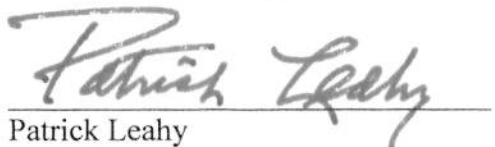

Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senator


Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator


Martin Heinrich
United States Senator


Joe Manchin III
United States Senator


Bill Nelson
United States Senator


Patrick Leahy
United States Senator