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House Appropriations Subcommittee Boost to Afterschool and Summer Learning Funding is ‘Welcome, But Not Adequate to Meet the Challenges We Face Today,’ Afterschool Leader Says

Statement of Jodi Grant, Executive Director, Afterschool Alliance

“Throughout our country, parents, school systems, cities and states are struggling like never before. Questions about how and when we will educate our children this fall, while keeping them, their families and communities safe, are paramount. As we try to meet the twin imperatives to protect our health *and* educate our children, we know that out-of-school-time programs will have to play a vastly expanded role, stepping in to keep kids safe and help them learn during the expanded hours, days and weeks when schools are physically closed.

We commend the House Appropriations Committee’s Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies for proposing to increase the appropriation for the Nita M. Lowey 21st Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative by \$13 million at its mark-up late Monday. 21st CCLC is the only federal funding stream dedicated to afterschool, before-school, and summer learning programs; while Congress has wisely provided small increases in recent years, the program was underfunded before the pandemic and, as a result, millions of students were unsupervised in the afternoons. Now, with COVID-19 affecting just about every community and school system, demand is growing exponentially for afterschool and summer learning programs and the costs to run them safely are rising sharply as well.

The increase the Subcommittee proposed is welcome, but not adequate to meet the need. The country needs a substantially greater investment in out-of-school time programs if we are to meet the challenges we face today.”

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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.