



NEWS RELEASE  
October 14, 2004

CONTACT: Gretchen Wright  
202/371-1999 OR  
202/421-5830 (cell)

## **House & Senate Declare October 14 *Lights On Afterschool Day*, As Americans Rally from Coast to Coast for Afterschool Programs**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – To raise awareness about the need for more afterschool programs and advance funding for quality afterschool care, both houses of Congress passed resolutions supporting the goals and ideals of *Lights On Afterschool*, the national rally for afterschool that includes more than 7,000 events in the U.S. and around the world this week. The fifth annual *Lights On Afterschool* is the largest afterschool rally ever held, involving hundreds of thousands of students, parents, educators, lawmakers, business leaders and community members. This is the first time Congress has passed resolutions in support of the event.

In the resolutions, Congress declares October 14, 2004 *Lights On Afterschool Day*. Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Christopher Dodd (D-CT), Olympia Snowe (R-ME), Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Representatives Dale Kildee (D-MI) and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) led the efforts to pass them.

“We welcome the resolutions in support of *Lights On Afterschool*,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Judy Y. Samelson. “Americans want more funding for the afterschool programs that keep kids safe, help working families and inspire children to learn. Funding for the federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers initiative has been stalled for four years, and is now just half of what was authorized in the No Child Left Behind Act. We hope this will help build momentum for the afterschool funding increases that families need.”

*Lights On Afterschool* this year will bring lawmakers together with community leaders to explore ways to create more afterschool programs and sustain those already operating. The event’s 2004 National Presenting Sponsor is the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the JCPenney Afterschool Fund is a National Sponsor of the event. The David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Open Society Institute are providing additional support. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is National Chair of *Lights On Afterschool* again this year.

# # # #

## Add One

NOTE: A sampling of events around the country is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org/loa\\_2004/documents/events.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loa_2004/documents/events.pdf) . A full list of the more than 7,000 events is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org/loa\\_2004/find.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loa_2004/find.cfm)

*The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization supported by a group of public, private, and nonprofit entities working to ensure that all children and youth have access to afterschool programs by the year 2010. More information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*

*The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, established in 1926 in Flint, Michigan, by an automotive pioneer, is a private philanthropy committed to supporting projects that promote a just, equitable and sustainable society. More information is available at [www.mott.org](http://www.mott.org).*

*JCPenney Afterschool is committed to helping provide children with high-quality, affordable after-school programs to help them reach the "power of their potential." The JCPenney Afterschool Fund is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. JCPenney has contributed millions of dollars to five of America's leading after-school providers. JCPenney Afterschool's support helps provide safe, fun and educational after-school programs and raises awareness of the need for more such programs across the country.*