



NEWS RELEASE
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**Nation's Leading Afterschool Advocate Applauds
Boxer-Murkowski-Murray 'Afterschool for America's Children Act'**

***Releases Sign-On Letter from More than 140 National, State & Local
Organizations Supporting S.326***

WASHINGTON, DC – The nation's leading afterschool advocacy organization today applauded U.S. Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Patty Murray (D-WA) for re-introducing the "Afterschool for America's Children Act." The bipartisan legislation strengthens the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative—the nation's chief federal funding stream for afterschool programs—by supporting the innovative advances taking root in before-school, afterschool and summer learning programs. The organization also released a sign-on letter from a diverse array of some 140 organizations, including more than 50 national and 85 state and local organizations, all of which endorse the bill.

"Quality afterschool programs do so much for our families and communities," said Jodi Grant, Executive Director of the Afterschool Alliance. "Afterschool programs keep children safe, inspire them to learn, and support working families. They're a terrific investment in our children and our future. We're proud to support this bill, and deeply appreciative of the leadership provided by Sens. Boxer, Murkowski and Murray. They are true champions for afterschool. We're also thrilled that the afterschool community has rallied to support this vital piece of legislation, as is evidenced by the strong and deep support for the bill that we're seeing from national, state and local organizations."

The national organizations joining the Afterschool Alliance in signing onto the letter of support are a broad cross-section of organizations active on a range of issues. They include After-School All-Stars, American Clinical Board of Nutrition, American Heart Association, Camp Fire USA, the Food Research and Action Center, Mental Health America, National Association for Bilingual Education, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Farm to School Network, National Science Teachers Association, National Summer Learning Association, Net Literacy, Save the Children, YMCA of the USA, the United States Tennis Association, and many others.

The letter praises the leadership of Senators Boxer, Murkowski, and Murray and endorses the bill, noting that,

Quality 21st CCLC programs result from collaborations between schools and community-based organizations and provide hands-on, experiential learning opportunities that align with lessons taught during the school-day. Evaluations and teacher reports have revealed positive results in behavior and academic achievement for students who regularly attend 21st CCLCs: students who attend 21st CCLC programs more regularly are more likely to improve their grades, test scores and overall academic behavior.

The legislation, introduced in the Senate as S. 326 (symbolic of the contributions that afterschool programs make to children from **3:00 to 6:00**), would:

- Strengthen school-community partnerships to include sharing of data and resources, the ability to better leverage relationships within the community and provide an intentional alignment with the school day.
- Promote professional development and training for afterschool program staff.
- Encourage innovative new ways to engage students in learning that looks different from a traditional school day, with an emphasis on hands-on, experiential learning; science, technology, engineering and math; social and emotional learning; and physical activity and nutrition education. It supports approaches that focus on individualized learning that provide a variety of ways for students to master core skills and knowledge.
- Provide accountability measures that are connected to college- and career-readiness goals and show student progress over time toward meeting indicators of student success including school attendance, grades and on-time grade level advancement.
- Ensure that funding supports programs that utilize evidence-based, successful practices.
- Increase quality and accountability through parent engagement, better alignment with state learning objectives and coordination between federal, state and local agencies.
- Does not prioritize one model of expanded learning opportunities over another.
- Maintain formula grants to states that then distribute funds to local school-community partnerships through a competitive grant process.

A significant body of research demonstrates that students who attend 21st CCLC afterschool programs regularly are more likely to improve their grades, tests scores and overall academic behavior. More than 15 million school-age children – more than one in four kids in the United States – are unsupervised after the school day ends. The parents of 18 million children say they would enroll their kids in afterschool programs – *if such programs were available to them*.

The full text of the letter and list of signers is available [here](#). A summary of the legislation is available [here](#).

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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.