



STATEMENT OF JODI GRANT  
Executive Director, Afterschool Alliance  
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CONTACT: Lisa Lederer  
202/371-1999

## **Afterschool Leader Deeply Disappointed by Bush Veto**

### ***Nation's Top Afterschool Advocate Urges Congress to Override President's Veto of Education Spending Bill, Preserve Afterschool Increase***

“It is terribly disappointing that President Bush today vetoed an appropriations bill that contained the first increase in six years for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) – the chief federal funding stream for afterschool programs. This modest increase of \$100 million would make afterschool programs available to 100,000 additional children. It funded 21 CCLC afterschool programs at over the \$1 billion mark for the first time – something that is badly needed and long overdue. The *No Child Left Behind Act* authorized \$2.5 billion for this initiative this year.

We understand that these are tight budgetary times, but millions of families are counting on Congress to do whatever is necessary to preserve the afterschool funding increase. With more than 14 million kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup>-graders unsupervised and at risk after the school day ends, it is past time for us to increase our investment in quality afterschool programs.

In fact, afterschool programs are a wise and worthwhile investment. They keep children safe, inspire them to learn, help working families, and reduce teen pregnancy, substance abuse, juvenile crime and gang involvement.

We urge Congress to do whatever is necessary to preserve the modest increase in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC spending next year.”

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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](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*