



NEWS RELEASE
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State Representative Tracy Maxwell Heard Honored as an Afterschool Champion in Nation's Capital

*Parents, Educators, Students, Afterschool Leaders
Urge Congress to Increase Afterschool Funding*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Afterschool Alliance today honored Ohio State Representative Tracy Maxwell Heard for her support for afterschool programs at the “Breakfast of Champions,” a gala event in Washington, D.C. which featured U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Afterschool Matters Chair Maggie Daley. Heard was one of just seven individuals from around the country honored for supporting, and working on behalf of, the afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. The Ohio Afterschool Network nominated her for the honor.

Representative Heard has made afterschool programs and extended learning opportunities one of her legislative priorities. She works closely with the Ohio Afterschool Network and invited them to participate in a literacy improvement focus group. Heard also helped arrange a meeting between the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus and Supporting Student Success (S3), a group of afterschool and summer learning advocates.

Heard has drafted legislation that would ensure funding for Ohio afterschool programs in the state's 2010-2011 budget. According to experts, without state support, programs could be forced to close, imposing an even greater burden on Ohio families suffering in the current economy.

The “Breakfast of Champions” is part of the eighth annual *Afterschool for All Challenge*, sponsored by the Afterschool Alliance, which brings together hundreds of parents, educators, children, program directors and advocates from around the country for a series of events and meetings with Members of Congress. At the *Challenge*, the Afterschool Alliance released its *Roadmap to Afterschool for All*, which includes a series of recommendations to make afterschool programs available to all students.

“At this time of tremendous economic stress, America needs many more quality afterschool programs so that our kids are safe and supervised after the school day ends,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “The *No Child Left Behind Act* authorized slow, steady increases for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative, which is the principal federal funding stream for afterschool, but right now we are far below the \$2.5 billion authorized for this year. Our *Roadmap* demonstrates just how far we are from making sure every

child who needs afterschool has access to it. Reaching that goal will require increased contributions from all levels of government and the business and charitable communities. We are looking to the federal government to lead the way.” The *Roadmap* is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

Other state champions honored at the *Afterschool for All Challenge* are: THINK Together afterschool program Founder and CEO Randy Barth of Santa Ana, California; Dr. Ella Brunner, Associate Professor at Jefferson Community and Technical College in Louisville, Kentucky; Michigan State Senator Bill Hardiman; Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett of Maryland; New York State Deputy Secretary for Education Duffy Palmer; and Jeanette Scott, Principal of Eagle Ridge Elementary in Milledgeville, Georgia.

The “Breakfast of Champions” was sponsored by Abbott, United States Tennis Association, Bright House Networks, Marriott, Inc., Open Society Institute, NAMM, National Association of Chain Drug Stores, Cable in the Classroom, National Afterschool Association, National League of Cities, and Foundations, Inc.

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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.