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## **Budget Agreement Reaction: ‘Afterschool champions registered an enormous victory for children and families’**

*Statement of Jodi Grant, Executive Director, Afterschool Alliance*

“The budget agreement President Trump signed today, following final passage by the House and Senate, includes \$1.21 billion for 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC initiative), the principal federal funding stream for afterschool and summer learning programs. That figure is a \$20 million increase in funding, approved despite the President’s misguided proposal to eliminate the initiative altogether.

This victory had many authors, including the tens of thousands of people who weighed in from their home computers, by postcard and letter, by telephone and tweet, and with personal visits with Members of Congress. These budding activists recognized the great value of afterschool programs to their communities and the nation. They urged Congress to continue funding because they know afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and provide parents with peace of mind during the sometimes perilous after school hours.

Afterschool champions on Capitol Hill staved off a potential catastrophe for children and families. In particular, the Afterschool Alliance commends the work of Sens. Roy Blunt (R-MO) and Patty Murray (D-WA), Chair and Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions of the Senate Appropriations Committee; and Reps. Tom Cole (R-OK) and Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Chair and Ranking Member of the House Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies. In addition, we could not have prevailed without powerful work from Reps. Lou Barletta (R-PA), David Cicilline (D-RI), Dan Kildee (D-MI) and Nita Lowey (D-NY), as well as Sens. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Tina Smith (D-MN), Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) and Joe Manchin (D-WV). These elected leaders refused to budge from their commitment to afterschool and to the children and families it serves.

Unfortunately, the President has already chosen to renew the battle, proposing again to eliminate 21st CCLC funding in his FY 2019 budget. As in the past, we will work with lawmakers from both sides of the aisle to defeat the President’s proposal, doing all we can to ensure that Congress once again hears from and heeds the millions of Americans who support afterschool and summer learning and who will not sit still for the elimination of programs so vital to our communities and our nation.”

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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).*