



**NEWS RELEASE**  
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## **Senator Dole Called a “Champion for Children” For Urging More Federal Funding for Afterschool Programs**

Washington, DC -- Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Judy Y. Samelson today applauded U.S. Senator Elizabeth Dole for urging the Appropriations Committee to increase federal funding for afterschool programs in Fiscal Year 2005. In a July 6 letter to Chairman Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Ranking Member Tom Harkin (D-IA), Senator Dole urged the Appropriations Committee to provide \$1.1 billion for the federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers afterschool initiative next year. President Bush has proposed that the initiative be flat-funded at just \$1 billion in FY2005, for the fourth year in a row. The “No Child Left Behind Act” authorizes \$2 billion for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers next year, and the Afterschool Alliance and others are asking Congress for the full amount.

“Senator Dole has demonstrated that she is a true champion for children by asking for an increase in federal afterschool funding next year,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Judy Y. Samelson. “Afterschool funding has been stalled at \$1 billion for four years, and millions of children are missing out on the educational and other opportunities these programs provide. Senator Dole recognizes that we need to do much more to meet the pressing demand for afterschool programs in North Carolina and across the country.”

In May, the Afterschool Alliance released *America After 3 PM: A Household Survey on Afterschool in America*, the most in-depth study ever to explore how America’s children spend their afternoons. It found that, nationwide, just 6.5 million children are in afterschool programs, while the parents of another 15.3 million children say their children would participate if an afterschool program were available. Some 22 percent of North Carolina’s youth are responsible for taking care of themselves in the afternoons. *America After 3 PM* was funded by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund.

“My request for a modest ten percent increase of \$100 million would allow 140,000 more youth – 3,200 in North Carolina – the opportunity to participate,” Senator Dole said in the letter. “It is a step in the right direction... I believe that an investment of \$1.1 billion for the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Program is the right thing to do for our communities, for working families, and for children throughout America.”

*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 2010. More information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*

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