



**STATEMENT OF JUDY Y. SAMELSON**  
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## **Afterschool Alliance Applauds Kerry Support for Afterschool**

“Senator John Kerry demonstrated yesterday that he understands the need to invest in our nation’s youth when he pledged that, as president, he would dramatically increase support for afterschool programs. The Senator’s ‘School’s Open ‘Til 6’ plan would help American families by significantly increasing funding for afterschool programs, keeping schools open later, and offering reliable transportation so children can get home safely.

Senator Kerry pledged to fully fund the *No Child Left Behind Act*, which would increase afterschool funding from its current \$1 billion level to \$2.5 billion in 2007. This would give afterschool opportunities to 3.5 million students – a significant and welcome increase from the 1.4 million children currently served by federally funded afterschool programs.

Increasingly, candidates from both political parties recognize that afterschool is a winning issue because there is a compelling and urgent unmet need for safe, reliable afterschool care. Today in America, one in three middle school students care for themselves after school. With juvenile crime spiking between 3 and 6 PM, we all benefit when youth are in safe, educational, supervised activities.

Our recent study, *America After 3 PM*, found that the parents of more than 15 million children said their children would participate if afterschool programs were available. We welcome support from every lawmaker and every candidate who will help America’s families by making more afterschool programs available to our nation’s youth.”

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