



NEWS RELEASE
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New Poll Results: Eight in Ten Voters Favor Increased Afterschool Funding

Voters See Afterschool Building Safer Communities, Reducing Drop-out Rate, Helping Kids Learn

Washington, DC – A poll, conducted on election eve and election day, and released today shows that American voters want their newly elected officials to increase federal funding for afterschool programs across the nation, even if it means increasing taxes. The poll, conducted for the Afterschool Alliance by Lake, Snell, Perry & Associates, Inc., found that 82 percent of voters agree that “our newly elected public officials should increase funding for afterschool programs.” Moreover, when asked if they’d support “increas[ing] funding even if it leads to a tax increase,” 76 percent of voters – and 74 percent of Republican voters – agree that funding should be increased.

“There’s no shaking voters’ conviction on this question,” said Judy Y. Samelson, Executive Director of the Afterschool Alliance. “They see afterschool programs as vital to children, families and communities, and they want elected officials to spend what it takes to make sure quality afterschool care is available.”

Other findings from the study:

- Eighty-eight percent of voters agree that there should be some type of organized activity or safe place for children and teens to go after school (54 percent strongly agree).
- Support for afterschool crosses party and ideological lines. Ninety-three percent of Democrats, 82 percent of Republicans, and 91 percent of Independents agree on the need for an organized activity for children and teens.
- Voters perceive a variety of benefits from afterschool and identify a number of areas in which afterschool can play either an extremely or very important role. Two-thirds or more agree that afterschool can play an extremely or very important role in all of the following:

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- Building safer, strong communities by providing supervised, enriching environments for children and teens after school;
- Reducing the high school drop-out rate by keeping high school youth interested in school;
- Providing a solid academic foundation for young people to help prepare them for college and careers;
- Encouraging young people to become involved in their community through community service and service learning programs;
- Improving access to arts and music programs which have been declining in our public schools; and
- Increasing physical activity among children and teens to help prevent obesity and other health challenges.

“Americans’ willingness to spend more for afterschool is grounded in two things,” Samelson said. “First, Americans see that afterschool works on many levels, keeping kids safe, helping to inspire learning, and helping working families. Second, they know from personal experience that too many children don’t have access to afterschool programs. One reason for that is that the federal government has failed to live up to the commitment to afterschool that it made in the No Child Left Behind Act, badly underfunding the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative. And the results of that failure are in plain evidence to Americans.”

In May, the Afterschool Alliance released *America After 3 PM*, the most in-depth study ever to explore how America’s children spend their afternoons. It found that 14.3 million kindergarten through 12th graders take care of themselves after the school day ends, including almost four million middle school students in grades six to eight. The parents of 15.3 million children say their children would participate if an afterschool program were available, that study found. For *America After 3 PM*, 30,791 screening interviews were conducted from July to October of 2003 to determine overall participation in afterschool programs. More than 1,800 parents of afterschool participants and more than 16,000 parents of non-participants completed follow-up questionnaires as part of the *America After 3 PM* research. The study was funded by JCPenney Afterschool.

The November telephone survey was designed and administered for the Afterschool Alliance by Lake, Snell, Perry & Associates, Inc. It was conducted on November 1 and 2, 2004, and reached 1,000 self-described definite voters nationwide. The margin of error for the survey is +/-3.1%.

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.

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