



NEWS RELEASE

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South Carolina Afterschool Alliance Lauds U.S. Representative Spratt for Joining Congressional Afterschool Caucus

5th District Member of Congress First in State to Join Caucus

Columbia, SC ---- The South Carolina Afterschool Alliance today praised U.S. Representative John Spratt for becoming the first member of the South Carolina congressional delegation to join the newly formed Afterschool Caucus. Launched in March 2005, and co-chaired in the House of Representatives by Representatives Nita M. Lowey (D-NY) and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), the caucus works to build support for afterschool programs and increase resources for quality afterschool care.

“We need leaders like Representative Spratt to stand up for afterschool in Congress,” said South Carolina Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Zelda Q. Waymer. “Afterschool programs make a wonderfully positive difference in the lives of children in South Carolina and across the country, but the federal government isn’t living up to its funding commitment from the *No Child Left Behind Act*. The Afterschool Caucus is working to build bipartisan support for afterschool funding, and we’re very hopeful that Representative Spratt’s participation will encourage other South Carolina Representatives and Senators to follow his lead.”

The Senate Afterschool Caucus is co-chaired by Senators Christopher J. Dodd (D-CT) and John Ensign (R-NV). Its founding members are Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Susan Collins (R-ME).

“I’m proud to be the first South Carolina member of the Afterschool Caucus, and eager to see the day when all our children have vibrant afterschool programs available to them,” said Representative Spratt. “We’ve got a lot of work to do in our schools, and providing full funding for afterschool programs needs to be high on the list of priorities.”

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“Afterschool programs help keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families,” said Jodi Grant, executive director of the Afterschool Alliance, a national organization not affiliated with the South Carolina Afterschool Alliance. “We’re proud to have played a role in helping establish the Afterschool Caucus, and delighted by its continuing growth. Representative Spratt’s leadership on this issue is an important step in achieving our long-term objective of afterschool for all.”

The *No Child Left Behind Act* established a multi-year roadmap for slow but steady growth in afterschool funding, reflecting a national consensus that afterschool should be expanded. The Act’s funding level for Fiscal Year 2006 (which began October 1, 2005) was \$2.25 billion, but the President proposed an appropriation of just \$991 million. Congress has yet to take final action on afterschool funding, but it appears headed toward approving that figure. The resulting afterschool funding gap between the authorization and the expected appropriation would leave 1.75 million children nationwide without the afterschool programs Congress and the President agreed to in *No Child Left Behind*.

Founded in 2000, the South Carolina Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit organization working to establish a statewide network of diverse stakeholders to guide, support and enable quality afterschool services and policies for all children and youth in South Carolina. More information is available at www.scafterschool.com.

For a complete list of Afterschool Caucus members in both the Senate and the House, visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/caucuses.cfm>

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