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## **President’s Renewed Push to Eliminate Federal Support for Afterschool ‘Threatens Children, Families, Communities Nationwide’**

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

“For the fourth year in a row, President Trump is proposing to eliminate the principal federal funding stream for afterschool programs, ending the federal investment in afterschool and summer learning programs and closing down the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative – which was renamed Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers in a bipartisan vote late last year.

If Congress agrees to the President’s FY2021 budget proposal, afterschool programs serving 1.7 million children will lose the funding they need. Young children will be left without adult supervision. Vital learning opportunities in STEM and other disciplines will be lost. Students will miss out on opportunities to work in teams, engage with mentors, and explore college and careers. Working parents will be forced to choose between paychecks and their children’s safety. Healthy habits of eating and exercise will be sacrificed.

The President’s proposal is a lose-lose-lose that threatens children, families, and communities nationwide. In making this proposal, the White House is ignoring [decades of research](#) demonstrating the many ways afterschool programs help students succeed in school and in life. Just last fall, the U.S. Department of Education [published a report](#) that found:

“The performance data indicate that this broad-ranging program touches students’ lives in ways that will have far-reaching, positive impact” and concluded “Over the past year this program has resulted in over 2 million low-income students and family members having a safe place to receive academic enrichment. The students who participate in the 21st CCLC program are among the most at risk. The performance on the GPRA [Government Performance and Results Act] measures indicate that many participants are showing improved behavior and homework completion, student grades, and mathematics or reading/language arts assessment results.”

In each of the last three budget cycles, Congress rejected this proposal – twice when both chambers were controlled by the President’s own party. Yet still, the White House is again taking aim at a program essential to students, families and communities across America. States, which have been administering the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program for nearly 20 years, are already preparing their next round of competition for grants.

Parents, educators, business leaders, community organizations and others across the country will vigorously challenge this ill-conceived proposal that would harm so many children, families, schools and communities, as well as our workforce and military readiness.

While Congress has thrice rejected the President's efforts to eliminate this important program, his proposals have nevertheless constrained the debate, stifling discussion of the significant increase in funding for afterschool that our country needs. This year, we are determined to advance that important conversation and will push for a \$100 million increase in 21st CCLC funding, which would give 100,000 more children safe, engaging, educational activities each afternoon, instead of being unsupervised and at risk during those often-perilous hours.

As in the past, we will work with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to see that the President's proposal is rejected. As modest as the federal government's current investment in afterschool is, it is crucial to families and communities, providing afterschool to 1.7 million children and leveraging support from public and private sources to support afterschool for many more. For every child now in an afterschool program, [two more are waiting to get in](#), demonstrating that we are nowhere near achieving the goal of making afterschool available to every child who needs it. We will not turn our backs on America's children."

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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).*