

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 26, 2015

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and
Human Services, Education and Related
Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
H-309, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and
Human Services, Education and Related
Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

We respectfully urge you to support the President's Fiscal Year 2016 request of \$1.15 billion for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program in the Labor, Health, and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. Today, families are relying more than ever on afterschool and summer learning programs as they struggle to keep their jobs, often taking on more hours, and provide their children with basic necessities. Parents who can be secure in the knowledge that their children are exposed to great opportunities in afterschool and summer programs are more productive at work and miss fewer days, and, most importantly, student participants in the programs do better in school and are more likely to graduate.

Many 21st Century Community Learning Centers serving low-income children provide not only academic enrichment, but also healthy snacks and meals. Unfortunately, many children are not able to benefit from such services because a growing number of families can no longer afford afterschool programs or the cost of transporting their children to these programs. Just when families need the support most, programs are being forced to reduce services, increase fees or even shut their doors. It is imperative to ensure that these programs are able to meet growing demands.

The previous reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act included a bipartisan commitment to quality afterschool programs, which is a commendable promise. Unfortunately, there are still far from enough afterschool programs to meet the needs of our most underprivileged parents and children. The report entitled *America After 3PM*, based on a national survey last year, found that although afterschool programs are serving more young people than ever, the number of unsupervised children in the United States has increased. In fact, more than 19 million children have parents who would like to enroll their child in an afterschool program if one were affordable or accessible. Additionally, between 2002 and 2010, only one in three applicants for 21st Century Community Learning Centers were awarded grants. Insufficient funding over the years is estimated to have resulted in 36,000 communities and 3.6 million children and youth without access to afterschool programs. A 2012 survey of afterschool

program providers found that close to nine in ten programs reported that there were children in their community who need afterschool services but are unable to access them.

We need to do better for children and parents. Afterschool programs keep kids safe, improve academic performance and help working families across America. Studies have shown that quality programs give students the academic, social and career-ready skills they need to succeed. Students who regularly attend have better grades and behavior in school, better peer relations and emotion well-being, and lower incidences of drug-use, violence and unintended pregnancy. For example, research in 2011 and 2012 from several state education departments found that teachers report that students regularly participating in 21st Century Community Learning Centers show improvements in homework completion, class participation, attendance, behavior in class, and reading and math achievement scores and grades. A separate 2013 study out of University of California, Irvine's School of Education found that regular participation in afterschool programs helped to narrow the achievement gap between high-income and low-income students in math, improved academic and behavioral outcomes and reduced school absences.

Support for federal funding for afterschool programs is deep, enduring and bipartisan. Even in this tight fiscal environment, Americans recognize the need to continue supporting these critical programs. We appreciate the challenging situation you face with the Fiscal Year 2016 Labor, Health, and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill and thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



David Scott
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



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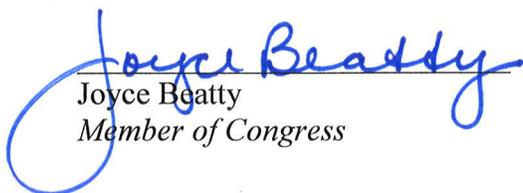
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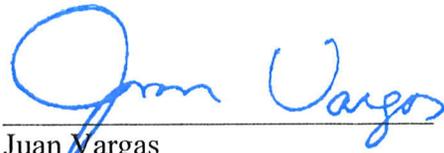
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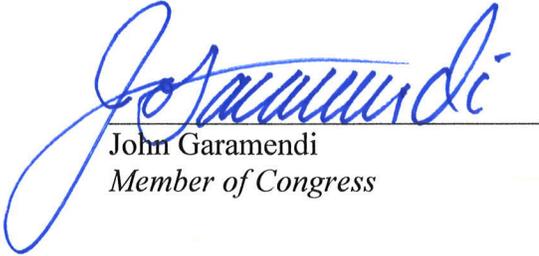
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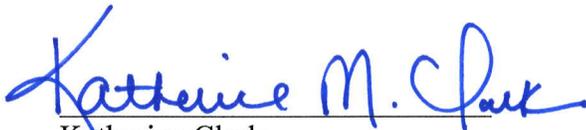
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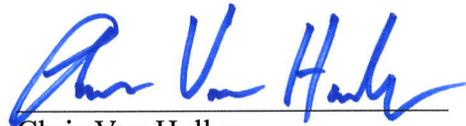
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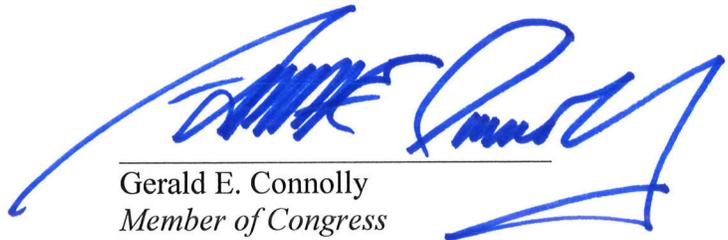
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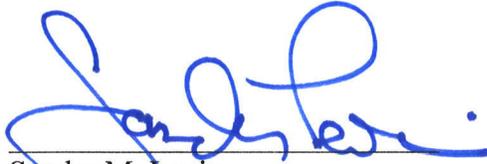
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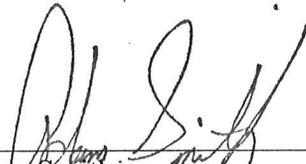
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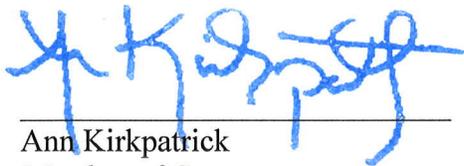
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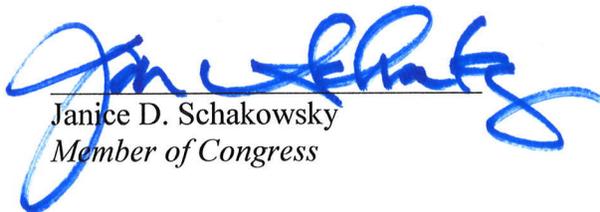
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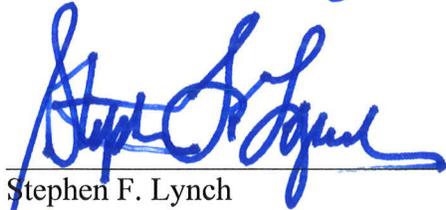
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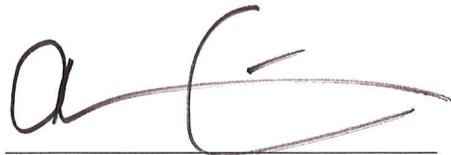
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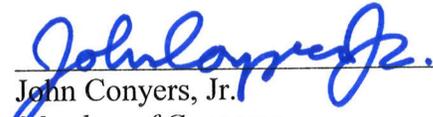
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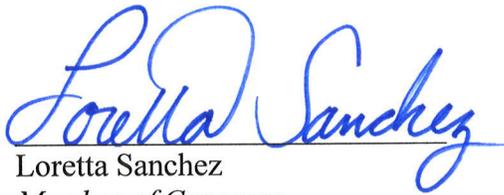
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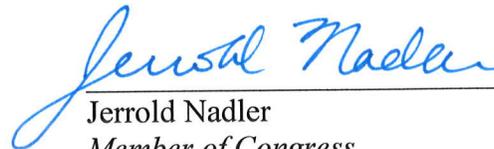
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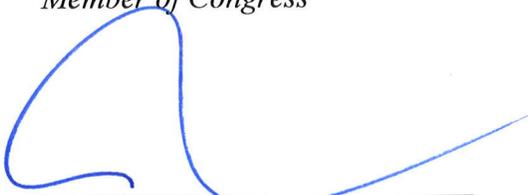
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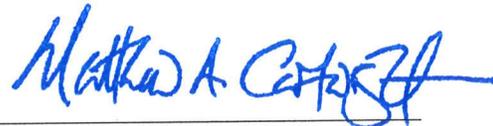
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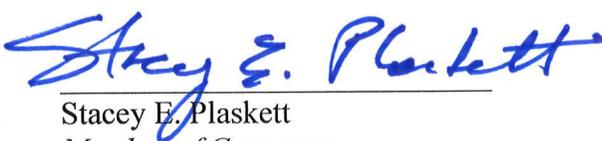
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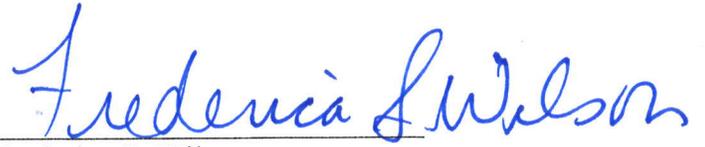
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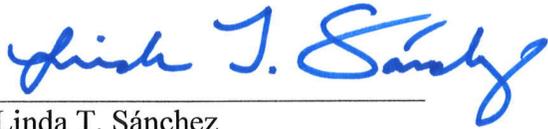
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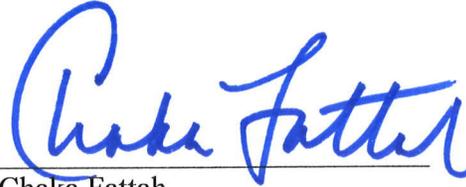
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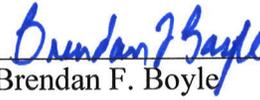
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