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Jewish Federation

OF GREATER NEW ORLEANS

April 16, 2018

Honorable Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senate
520 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cassidy,

Thank you for your support of local afterschool and summer learning programs that rely on federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) funding to provide quality programs to more than 1.6 million young people. As Congress works to finish the FY2018 spending process and starts the FY2019 process, we urge you to preserve and protect 21st CCLC funding in the federal budget.

The 21st CCLC program provides an environment where extended academic learning is the norm, and it currently impacts more than 45,000 thousand children in Louisiana. Students in the 21st CCLC afterschool program demonstrably achieve better in math, reading, and other subjects; have fewer behavioral problems; and have better attendance records.

In general, afterschool and summer learning programs help working families by keeping kids safe and productively engaged when school is not in session – the time when youth are most at risk of losing ground. A wide range of research has found that regular participation in high-quality summer and afterschool learning programs is linked to significant gains in academics, school attendance, and work habits, as well as reductions in behavior problems among disadvantaged students. Without funding for summer and afterschool programs, students will lose out on essential learning opportunities that help them prepare for school, college, and careers.

For these reasons, support for public investment in afterschool and summer learning programs is high. The recently-released Phi Delta Kappa International Poll of the Public's Attitudes Towards the Public Schools found that 92 percent of Americans believe local public schools should be providing afterschool programs. A little bit of federal investment goes a long way to support afterschool learning opportunities of all kinds at the local level.

When you vote on a final FY2018 omnibus spending bill this year, we strongly urge you to maintain or increase funding to the 21st CCLC initiative by providing at least \$1.192 billion for local school and community afterschool and summer learning programs. And when the FY2019 process kicks off, we ask that you reject the Administration's proposal and protect this important lifeline for students, families, and communities. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Henry Miller | Chair, Board of Trustees
Arnie D. Fielkow | Chief Executive Officer
Bradley Bain | Chair, Jewish Community Relations Council

cc: Honorable John Kennedy