



# THE HIDDEN COSTS OF ELIMINATING AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

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**“ NO MATTER WHERE YOU STAND POLITICALLY, IT’S A COMPLICATED TIME TO BE HUMAN—ESPECIALLY FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS NAVIGATING AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE. ”**

As both a parent and the leader of a children’s welfare organization, I find myself returning to one essential question: Is this the future we want for our kids?

Right now, that future is at risk. The proposed elimination of 21st Century Community Learning Centers, which fund vital afterschool programs across the country, is more than just a budget cut—it’s a blow to opportunity, safety, and equity for our children.

Let’s be clear: cutting these programs is short-sighted. Afterschool initiatives save at least three tax dollars for every one spent by reducing the need for remedial education, grade repetition, and disciplinary interventions. They also provide a safe environment for students during the hours when they are most vulnerable to risky behavior. Without them, we will face greater costs down the line—financially and morally.

## AND WHAT IS THE COST OF BROKEN DREAMS OR UNTAPPED POTENTIAL?

At The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey, our Positive Impact program—part of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative—has helped thousands of middle school students reach their fullest potential. These programs do more than just keep students occupied after school. They:

- Support academic achievement by reinforcing core subjects and aligning with state education standards.
- Offer enrichment activities during after-school hours and summer breaks.
- Create opportunities for families to engage meaningfully in their children’s education, including through literacy programs.
- Provide support services and prevention education through partners like our Kidsbridge program, which addresses drug use, violence, and promotes character education.



Two decades of research have shown that students in these programs are more likely to graduate and attend college. But the best testament comes from the students themselves. As one Positive Impact graduate put it:

**“ POSITIVE IMPACT HAS BEEN A MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE THAT PROVIDED ME WITH LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND NEW SKILLS—ALONG WITH SOCIAL SKILLS AND LIFELONG FRIENDSHIPS. ”**

Isn’t that exactly the kind of future we want for all our children—especially those growing up in Trenton, Camden, Newark, Paterson, and other communities where opportunities are too often limited? The bottom line is simple: afterschool programs keep kids safe, spark their curiosity, and support working families. In today’s world, they aren’t a luxury—they’re a necessity.

Please take a moment to stand up for the future of our children. Click the link below to automatically generate a message to your representative and urge continued funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

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