

# Proposed Federal Cuts Threaten After-School Programs for Over 3,200 Iowa Children

This research brief is by FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS, an anti-crime organization of over 2,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, and victims of crime, including 95 members in Iowa.

## The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime

When the school bell rings, turning millions of children and teens out on the street with neither constructive activities nor adult supervision, violent crime soars. On school days, 3-6 PM are the peak hours for teens to:

- Commit crimes.<sup>1</sup>
- Be in or cause a car crash.<sup>2</sup>
- Be victims of crime.<sup>3</sup>
- Smoke, drink, or use drugs.<sup>4</sup>

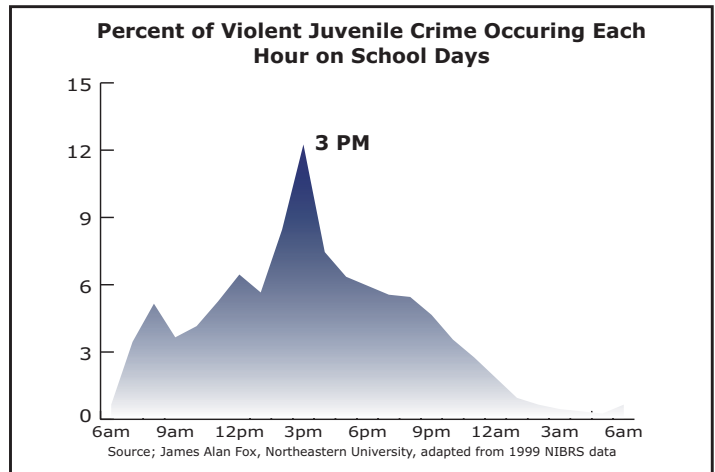
## 3,251 Iowa Children Face Elimination of Their After-School Programs

The Bush Administration has proposed cutting federal funding by 40 percent for after-school programs through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers. By cutting access for 570,000 American children<sup>5</sup> instead of making sure their after-school programs have adequate resources to provide high-quality services, America could lose the opportunity to prevent 41,000 crimes and save taxpayers and crime victims \$2.4 billion dollars.<sup>6</sup> Current funding for Iowa can serve almost 8,000 children and youths, but these cuts would eliminate services for 3,251 Iowa children.<sup>7</sup>

## Research Proves Quality After-School Programs Cut Crime

Instead of cutting back on the 21st Century program, policy makers should be working to expand programs and improve their quality. Studies of two programs demonstrate what after-school programs can achieve:

- High school freshmen were randomly selected from welfare families to participate in the four-year Quantum Opportunities after-school and graduation incentives program. Six years later, boys who did not participate in the program averaged six times more criminal convictions than participants. Boys and girls left out were four times



more likely to be without high school degrees and less than half as likely to be in college. Teens not in the program were 50 percent more likely to have children during their high school years.<sup>8</sup>

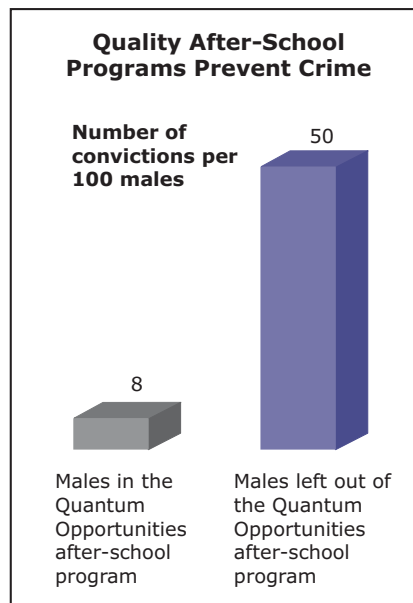
- Five housing projects without Boys & Girls Clubs were compared to five where new clubs were established. When the program began, drug use and vandalism in the two groups of housing projects were the same. By the time the study ended, those without the programs had 50 percent more vandalism and scored 37 percent worse on drug activity.<sup>9</sup>

## After-School Investments Save Money

The Quantum Opportunities after-school program produced benefits to participants and the public of \$3 for every \$1 spent, without even accounting for the savings from a dramatic reduction in crime.<sup>10</sup>

## Law Enforcement is United

Iowa law enforcement leaders overwhelmingly agree: abandoning children and youth to the street will worsen crime and other problems.<sup>11</sup> We must increase, not cut, support for after-school programs.



## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Fox, J.A. (2003). *Time of day for youth violence (ages 10-17)*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University, adapted from 1999 National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) data.
- <sup>2</sup> Rice, T. (2000). Los Angeles: Southern California Injury Prevention Research Center, School of Public Health, University of California—Los Angeles. At the request of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, Professor Rice found that during the months when school is in session, the peak hours for teens 16-17 to cause automobile accidents—as well as the peak hours for them to be in such an accident—are from 3-6 pm.
- <sup>3</sup> Fox, J.A. (2003). *Time of day for youth violence (ages 10-17)*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University, adapted from 1999 National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) data.
- <sup>4</sup> Richardson, J.L, Dwyer, K., McGuigan, K., Hansen, W.B., Dent, C., Johnson, C.A., Sussman, S.Y., Brannon, B., & Flay, B. (1989). Substance use among eighth-grade students who take care of themselves after school. *Pediatrics*, 84(3), 556-566.
- <sup>5</sup> The number of children currently served is based on the yearly number of children served through the current funding level of \$1 billion. See: Afterschool Alliance. (2003). *Closing the door on afterschool programs: An analysis of how the proposed cut to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Program will affect children and their families in every state*. Retrieved from [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/charts/chart\\_book.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/charts/chart_book.pdf)
- <sup>6</sup> If, instead of cutting services for 570,000 children and youths nationwide, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers programs (21st-CCLCP) were improved so that they achieved results similar to the Quantum Opportunities program, an estimated 41,000 crimes would be prevented and taxpayers and crime victims would save an estimated \$2.4 billion dollars. All Quantum Opportunities (QO) participants were living in households where at least one of several forms of federal and/or local government assistance was received. According to a report of a nationally representative sample of 21st-CCLCP (see reference below), 18.3% of the participants' families received food stamps and 7.4% received TANF. There is no report of the percentage of families receiving both, nor of those receiving other forms of government assistance. Given that some percentage of families received other forms of government assistance, it is likely that the combined figure of 25.7% (18.3% + 7.4%) is an underestimate of the percentage of 21st-CCLCP participants that financially resemble QO participants. To compute the number of arrests that would be prevented if 21st-CCLCP can achieve results similar to those of QO, the following procedures were followed: The average number of arrests for QO control group members (.56) and for QO participants (.28) were applied to the 25.7% of 21st-CCLCP participants who financially resemble the QO participants (146,490 of the 570,000 21st-CCLCP children). The difference between these numbers (41,017) is the number of crimes prevented. For a description of the 21<sup>st</sup>-CCLCP sample, see: U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Under Secretary. (2003). *When schools stay open late: The national evaluation of the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Community Learning Centers Program, First Year Findings*. Washington, DC: Author. The potential savings estimates are derived from the work of Steve Aos and his colleagues (see reference below). They estimated that the QO after-school program saved taxpayers and crime victims an average of \$16,428 in crime costs for every youth served. This figure does not include decreased welfare expenditures and increased tax dollars from higher earnings. If similar results can be achieved with 146,490 (25.7%) of the 570,000 kids affected by the proposed funding cut to the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCP, the savings to taxpayers and crime victims is \$2.4 billion. For a cost-benefit analysis of QO, see: Aos, S., Phipps, P., Barnoski, R., & Lieb, R. (2001). *The comparative costs and benefits of programs to reduce crime: Version 4.0*. Retrieved from the Washington State Institute for Public Policy Web site: <http://www.wa.gov/wsipp/crime/pdf/costbenefit.pdf> Even if only a fraction of the crimes from this broad-based projection are prevented, the long-term savings to taxpayers far outweigh the costs of investing in after-school programs.
- <sup>7</sup> The number of children who would no longer be served was calculated by subtracting the number of children able to be served after the cuts (n=4,705) from the number of children currently served through the program (n=7,956). See: Afterschool Alliance. (2003). *Closing the door on afterschool programs: An analysis of how the proposed cut to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Program will affect children and their families in every state*. Retrieved from [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/charts/chart\\_book.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/charts/chart_book.pdf)
- <sup>8</sup> Lattimore, C.B., Mihalic, S.F., Grotspeter, J.K., & Taggart, R. (1998). *The Quantum Opportunities Program*. In D.S. Elliot (Series Ed.). *Blueprints for violent prevention: Book four*. Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence.
- <sup>9</sup> Schinke, S.P., Orlandi, M.A., & Cole, K.C. (1992). Boys and Girls Clubs in public housing developments: Prevention services for youths at risk. *Journal of Community Psychology, OSAP Special Issue*, 118-128.
- <sup>10</sup> Lattimore, C.B., Mihalic, S.F., Grotspeter, J.K., & Taggart, R. (1998). *The Quantum Opportunities Program*. In D.S. Elliot (Series Ed.). *Blueprints for violent prevention: Book four*. Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence.
- <sup>11</sup> In response to a Mason-Dixon Polling and Research survey, an overwhelming 71 percent of the nation's law enforcement leaders chose providing "more after-school programs and educational child care programs" as the most effective strategy for reducing youth violence and crime. Many respondents favored adopting more than one strategy, and a majority ranked hiring more police officers as the second most effective approach. See: Mason-Dixon Polling and Research. (2002, August). *National law enforcement leadership survey*. Retrieved from the Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Web site: <http://www.fightcrime.org/reports/nationalkidspoll2002>