

To: House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs

From: Nicole Miller, Executive Director, Vermont Afterschool

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Re: S.232 – Section 3 (Afterschool and Summer Special Fund)

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Good afternoon, my name is Nicole Miller and I'm the Executive Director of Vermont Afterschool, a nonprofit organization that works to strengthen afterschool and summer programs, empower youth, and expand access so that any child or youth in Vermont who wants to attend a program, can do so. Our organization works directly with all types of afterschool and summer programs to provide professional development, tools, resources, and more, including for child care programs, schools, public libraries, parks and recreation, YMCAs, Boys & Girls Clubs, museums, teen centers, and many other youth-serving organizations. I am a member of the Afterschool and Summer Advisory Committee created through Act 78, and our organization serves as the Vermont entity for both the 50 State Afterschool Network and the National Afterschool Association. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about S.232.

Vermont Afterschool is in full support of the bill and are grateful for all the work and effort to find a compromise. Libraries are a well-known community resource and as this bill's findings share, have long been a part of the afterschool and summer programming options in Vermont's communities. When I ran a program for over a decade in the northern part of the state, each of our community libraries were partners to help us provide a full year of afterschool and summer programming.

This amendment to the Afterschool and Summer Special Fund does several things:

- Clarifies the eligibility for the grant program funded by the Afterschool and Summer Special Fund, administered by the Agency of Education;
- Updates the Afterschool and Summer Advisory Committee's membership, charged with advising the Agency of Education on the Act 78 funds, to include the State Librarian or designee, who have been attending the meetings for the last year;
- Tasks the Afterschool and Summer Advisory Committee with annually soliciting public input on the grant program; and
- Provides an opportunity to ensure that smaller community-based organizations such as those in more rural parts of the State, including rural public libraries, are able to apply for and be successful applicants to fulfill the afterschool and summer needs of the youth in their communities.

We believe this bill supports the intent of the Afterschool and Summer Special Fund, in line with the goals of establishing universal afterschool and summer programs for any youth who want to participate, regardless of where they live and many other factors.

Thank you so much for your support over the years for afterschool and summer programming, and I welcome the opportunity to work with the committee as you are working on this bill.