

Memorandum

TO: All Members of the House of Representatives

FROM: Representative Jake Wheatley, Jr.

DATE: September 22, 2011

SUBJECT: Lights on Afterschool! Day in Pennsylvania

In the near future, I plan to introduce a resolution designating October 20, 2011 as “Lights on Afterschool! Day” in Pennsylvania. As you may know, this year marks the 12th annual commemoration of “Lights on Afterschool! Day” – a national event recognizing the importance of afterschool programs in the lives of children.

To be sure, children’s out-of-school hours represent the single biggest block of time for youth and a key moment during the development of children into adolescents, and adolescents into adults. Pennsylvania has over two million school-aged children and youth (6 to 17 years of age), with almost 1.3 million of them having both parents in the workforce, or in the case of single parent families, the sole parent in the workforce. According to the Afterschool Alliance, approximately 26 percent of all school-aged youth in the Commonwealth are responsible for taking care of themselves outside of school. Additionally, of all Pennsylvanian children currently not enrolled in afterschool programs, 32 percent would most likely participate in a program if one was available within their community.

Research on the benefits of afterschool programs is clear – demonstrating that out-of-school hours have a significant impact on the development of children and teenagers’ habits, attitudes, and skills that will ultimately help determine their academic and lifetime successes. High-quality afterschool programming improves student achievement, reduces crime by and against youth, and promotes positive social development. Across Pennsylvania, communities are already working together to develop safe, affordable, and enriching afterschool experiences for school-aged children and teens.

It is vitally important that the House of Representatives recognize the importance of these programs and support the contributions that providers and volunteers make to improve the lives of our young people. If you would like to co-sponsor this important resolution, please contact April Ashe in my Harrisburg office at 717-783-3783 or aashe@pahouse.net.