2019-2020 Legislative Priorities

The Massachusetts Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs is truly grateful for the ongoing support of our many champions on Beacon Hill. Each session, the policies and funding measures for which you advocate have a critical impact on the more than 175,000 young people that we serve across the Commonwealth. On behalf of the Clubs and kids in your district, we ask for your continued support for the Alliance’s 2019-2020 legislative priorities:

**SUPPORT - FY2020 Budget Earmark, Youth-at-Risk line item (#4590-1507)**

* With your help, the Alliance was able to secure a $1.7 million budget earmark for FY2019. While this allocation will provide a much-needed boost for our Clubs, this figure still represents a drastic decrease from our pre-recession funding level of $3.3 million. In recent years, we have experienced substantial increases in the number of children and families turning to us for help.
* ***Please support a $2.2 million earmark in the FY2020 budget.***

**SUPPORT – Cannabis Revenue Funding for After School Programs**

* This was a key recommendation from the ASOST Coordinating Council’s report. State revenues from the cannabis industry are a natural fit to support after school and out of school time programs across the Commonwealth. The young people served by these programs are vulnerable to substance use, misuse, and addiction – but after school programs like the Boys & Girls Clubs have immense protective and preventative value.
* We support bills that direct cannabis funding to support after school, such as S.260, “An Act relative to access for after school and out-of-school time programs”, filed by Senator Brendan Crighton and referred to the Joint Committee on Education.

**SUPPORT - Formation of an After School and Out-of-School Time (ASOST) Legislative Caucus**

* The publication of the After School and Out-of-School Time Coordinating Council’s report in December 2018 made clear that ASOST issues are important and deserve more focused attention and funding. We encourage the many after school champions in the Legislature to form a caucus, so that there is established forum for policy and funding-focused discussion.
* Please support the formation of an ASOST caucus – and please consider participating!

**SUPPORT – S.806, “An Act Creating the Home Works Program”**

* Sponsored by Senator Joan Lovely, this bill would address the pressing need to provide support to families and children receiving emergency housing assistance. Local school systems and agencies are already overburdened and state investment is needed to ensure that these children receive quality care, academic assistance and enrichment, and recreation.
* The Home Works program would allow these children to qualify for slots at approved after school and summer programs. Funding is directed to cost of attendance as well as, crucially, transportation. The Alliance is proud to stand in support of this bill along with the YMCAs.

**SUPPORT – S.312, “An Act stopping harm inflicted by the exploitation of life and development”**

* The Boys & Girls Clubs take the safety of our young members with utmost seriousness, and we are proud to support Senator Joan Lovely’s comprehensive child sexual abuse prevention bill. We particularly applaud the bill’s rigorous approach to abuse prevention and reporting training requirements for child-serving organizations.