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May 8, 2017

By electronic mail

The Honorable Ricardo Lara
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2206
Sacramento, California 95814

**RE: SB 78 (Leyva) – SUPPORT AS AMENDED, April 25,
2017**

Dear Senator Lara:

Public Advocates supports SB 78 (Leyva), as amended on April 25, 2017, the proposal to continuously appropriate additional funds from the General Fund to the After School Education and Safety (ASES) program in order to support and improve existing services and adjust the daily rate received by the program to reflect the increased cost of operating the programs.

Public Advocates is a civil rights legal organization that has served as a key voice for educational equity in landmark cases such as *Serrano v. Priest* and *Williams v. California*. We work to reverse inequities and ensure meaningful access to opportunity for students most affected by systemic injustices. Our commitment to “making rights real” has shaped our vision of building an educational system that prepares all students for college and career readiness, regardless of socioeconomic status, race, place of residency, language, or immigration status.

Since its founding in 2002, the ASES program has provided essential support services to over 400,000 low-income students in over 4,000 elementary, middle, junior high, and charter schools across California. Not only do students participate in academic and enrichment activities that keep students safe and off the streets for working families, but the ASES program has also been effective in closing achievement gaps. Other significant benefits of participating in ASES include improved attendance rates, English fluency, social-emotional skill development, and academic success. For many families who cannot afford child care, the ASES program is the only option for keeping their children safe before and after school.

Despite average attendance rates in the ASES program remaining relatively stagnant, operating costs have continued to rise due to various

factors such as raises in the minimum wage and state-mandated sick leave. Given that ASES programs continue to receive a daily rate of \$7.50 per pupil for three or more hours each day of academic and enrichment activities, programs are struggling to provide their students with high-quality services and are at risk of closure, which could displace as many as 120,000 students. In light of recent increases to the minimum wage, more funding is essential to ensure that ASES programs receive sufficient funds to remain stable and high-quality. SB 78 provides a necessary solution by appropriating an additional \$99,135,000 in the 2017-18 fiscal year and each fiscal year thereafter, and commencing with the increases to the minimum wage implemented during the 2018–19 fiscal year, and every year thereafter.

For these reasons, we support SB 78 and urge its passage through the Committee in order to reflect budget negotiations that are critical in ensuring low-income students are able to continue accessing this vital resource. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about our position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Liz Guillen".

Liz Guillen
Director of Legislative & Community Affairs
(916) 803-5596 – cell

Cc: Senate Appropriations Committee
Senator Connie Leyva

