

July 6, 2010

**In Support of the Youth PROMISE Act  
H.R. 1064 and S. 435**

Dear Member of Congress:

We, the undersigned, representing a broad array of children and youth-oriented specialties including juvenile justice, mental health, civil rights, education, youth work, legal services, and faith communities, respectfully express our strong support for the Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education Act (“Youth PROMISE Act”), bi-partisan and bi-cameral legislation sponsored by Representatives Robert C. “Bobby” Scott and Michael Castle (H.R. 1064) and Senators Robert Casey and Olympia Snowe (S. 435).

Rather than creating additional and duplicative punitive approaches, the Youth PROMISE Act builds upon evidence-based and promising practices proven to reduce youth violence and delinquency. Specifically, the Youth PROMISE Act directs resources towards communities facing an increased risk of crime and gang activity in order to enable those communities to begin to address significant unmet needs and prevent crime from occurring. Under the Youth PROMISE Act, communities facing the greatest youth gang, delinquency and crime challenges will come together – via a local council that includes law enforcement, community-based organizations, schools, faith organizations, health, social services, and mental health providers – to develop and implement a comprehensive local plan to support young people and their families and make our communities safer, reduce victimization, and help at-risk young people to lead law-abiding and healthy lives, free from gangs, delinquency and/or criminal involvement.

The Youth PROMISE Act provides for thorough evaluation, including analyses of the cost-savings to society yielded by investing in prevention and intervention rather than in more costly and ineffective prosecution and incarceration. Under the Youth PROMISE Act, savings from investments in prevention and intervention programs will be reinvested in prevention and intervention efforts funded under the Act.

The Youth PROMISE Act also provides for the hiring and training of Youth Oriented Policing Services (YOPS) officers to prevent and address juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity in a manner that is responsive to the research on juveniles and adolescent brain development. The Act’s Center for Youth Oriented Policing will be responsible for identification, development and dissemination of information related to strategic policing practices and technologies to law enforcement agencies, specifically related to the needs of young people. Additionally, the Act includes support for youth victim and witness protection programs, which are critical to deter crime.

Finally, the Youth PROMISE Act provides for the increased local coordination of federal programs designed to reduce and prevent juvenile delinquency and youth crime, and establishes a federal commission charged to carry out a nationwide, comprehensive study of the effectiveness of crime and delinquency prevention and intervention strategies.

In short, the approach of the Youth PROMISE Act makes sense, comports with the research on adolescent brain development and crime and violence prevention and intervention, and will yield overall savings to the community, according to both financial and life quality measures. For all of these reasons, we urge your support for H.R. 1064 and S. 435, the Youth PROMISE Act.

Please feel free to contact the Chairs of the Gang and Youth Violence Prevention Task Force of the National Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coalition with any questions: Tara Andrews at the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, 202-467-0864, ext. 109; Jennifer Bellamy at the American Civil Liberties Union, 202-715-0828; or Corryne Deliberto at World Vision, 202-572-6553.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

**International Organizations (7)**

Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants (CURE), International  
Continental Societies, Incorporated  
Covenant House International  
Human Rights Watch  
International Community Corrections Association  
Penal Reform International  
World Vision

**National Organizations (119)**

Afterschool Alliance  
Alliance for Children and Families  
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)  
American Bar Association  
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)  
American Correctional Association  
American Council of Chief Defenders  
American Federation of School Administrators, AFL-CIO  
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)  
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)  
American Jewish Congress  
American Probation and Parole Association  
American Psychological Association  
Asian American Justice Center  
ASPIRA, Inc.  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Boy Scouts of America  
Boys and Girls Clubs of America  
Campaign for Youth Justice  
Catholic Charities USA  
Center for Children's Law and Policy  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children's Defense Fund  
Coalition for Juvenile Justice  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)  
Correctional Education Association  
Council for Educators of At-Risk and Delinquent Youth  
Council for Opportunity in Education  
Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA)  
Family Justice  
Federal CURE  
First Five Years Fund  
Girls Inc.  
Immigrant Justice Network  
Institute for Community Peace

Justice Policy Institute  
Juvenile Justice Trainers Association  
Leadership Conference on Civil Rights  
League of Young Voters  
Legal Action Center  
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service  
Mennonite Central Committee Washington Office  
Mental Health America  
Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund (MALDEF)  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National African-American Drug Policy Coalition, Inc.  
National Alliance of Black School Educators  
National Alliance to End Homelessness  
National Alliance for Faith and Justice  
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)  
National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice  
National Association of Counties (NACo)  
National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers  
National Association of Juvenile Correctional Agencies  
National Association of Secondary School Principals  
National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials (NBC-LEO)  
National Black Police Association  
National Center for Youth Law  
National Consortium of TASC (Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities) Programs  
National Council for Community Behavioral Health  
National Council of La Raza  
National Council on Crime and Delinquency  
National Council on Educating Black Children  
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ)  
National Council for Urban (Gang) Peace, Justice and Empowerment  
National Education Association  
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
National Head Start Association  
National Hire Network  
National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild  
National Juvenile Defender Center  
National Juvenile Detention Association  
National Juvenile Justice Network  
National Network for Youth  
National Organization of Black Law Enforcement (NOBLE)  
National Organization of Concerned Black Men, Inc.  
National Partnership for Juvenile Services  
National Parent Teacher Association (PTA)  
National Trust for the Development of African-American Men  
National Urban League  
National Women's Law Center  
Open Society Policy Center  
The Peace Alliance  
Presbyterian Church (USA), Washington Office  
Prison Legal News  
Prisons Foundation

Restorative Community Foundation  
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
Students for Sensible Drug Policy  
The Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, Law and Policy Section  
The Rebecca Project for Human Rights  
The School Social Work Association of America  
The Sentencing Project  
The Student Peace Alliance  
Therapeutic Communities of America (TCA)  
Time Dollar Youth Court  
TimeBanks USA  
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society  
United Neighborhood Centers of America  
U.S. Conference of Mayors  
U.S. Dream Academy  
U.S. Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (USPRA)  
VOICES for America's Children  
W. Haywood Burns Institute  
Washington Office on Latin America  
Youth Law Center  
Youth Matter America

### **State and Local Organizations (116)**

#### **Alabama**

Alabama Youth Justice Coalition  
Equal Justice Initiative  
Southern Juvenile Defender Center  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
VOICES for Alabama's Children  
Parents, Youth, Children and Family Training Institute

#### **Arizona**

Children's Action Alliance

#### **California**

Alturas Mas Altas  
Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Office of Restorative Justice  
Asian Law Caucus  
Barrios Unidos – Santa Cruz Chapter  
City and County of San Francisco  
City of Los Angeles  
City of Pasadena  
Contra Costa County Public Defender's Office  
Everychild Foundation  
Faith Communities for Families and Children  
Homies Unidos  
Juvenile Court Judges of California

L.A. Unified School District  
L.A. Youth Justice Coalition  
Leaders in Community Alternatives, Inc.  
Pacific Juvenile Defender Center  
San Francisco Youth Commission

**Colorado**

The Pendulum Foundation

**Connecticut**

Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance  
Families Moving Forward  
The Poor People's Alliance, Connecticut Chapter

**Delaware**

Delaware Center for Justice (DE)

**District of Columbia**

Young America Works Public Charter School  
Columbia Heights Shaw Family Collaborative  
DC Alliance of Youth Advocates  
DC NAACP Youth Council  
Facilitating Leadership in Youth (FLY)  
Justice for DC Youth  
Latin American Youth Center  
Life Pieces to Masterpieces, Inc.

**Florida**

Children's Campaign, Inc.  
Florida Public Defender Association, Inc.  
Florida Public Defender, Fourth Judicial Circuit  
Florida Families for Fair Sentences  
Miami-Dade Public Defender's Office

**Illinois**

ACLU of Illinois  
Chicago Area Project  
John Howard Association of Illinois  
Juvenile Justice Initiative of Illinois  
Midwest Juvenile Defender Center  
PTA of Illinois  
United in Peace, Inc.

**Kansas**

H.O.P.E., Inc  
Kansas CURE

**Louisiana**

Families & Friends of La.'s Incarcerated Children  
Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana

**Maryland**

Advocates for Children and Youth  
CASA of Maryland, Inc.  
Fusion Partnerships, Inc.  
Identity, Inc.  
Law Office of Anthony J. Keber  
Maryland CURE  
Maryland Department of Juvenile Services  
Maryland Juvenile Justice Coalition  
Maryland Office of the Public Defender  
Public Justice Center

**Massachusetts**

Citizens for Juvenile Justice  
Youth Advocacy Project of the Committee for Public Counsel Services

**Michigan**

Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency

**Minnesota**

Minnesota Juvenile Justice Coalition

**Mississippi**

Mississippi CURE  
Mississippi Youth Justice Project

**Nebraska**

VOICES for Children in Nebraska

**New Hampshire**

New Hampshire Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

**New Jersey**

New Jersey Association on Correction

**New Mexico**

County of Santa Fe  
New Mexico Council on Crime and Delinquency  
New Mexico Criminal Defense Lawyers Association

**New York**

Center for Community Alternatives  
Central American Legal Assistance

City of New York  
City of New York Department of Juvenile Justice  
Correctional Association of New York  
The Fortune Society  
Juvenile Justice Center of Suffolk University Law School  
Quad A For KIDS / A Rochester Area Community Foundation Initiative

**North Carolina**

ACLU of North Carolina  
Action for Children North Carolina  
Council for Children's Rights  
UNC Juvenile Justice Clinic, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Law

**Ohio**

ACLU of Ohio  
Franklin County Public Defender  
Hispanic Urban Minority Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Outreach Program  
Juvenile Justice Coalition  
Peace in the Hood  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
VOICES for Ohio's Children

**Oregon**

Partnership for Safety and Justice

**Pennsylvania**

Mental Health Association in Pennsylvania  
Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.

**Puerto Rico**

Puerto Rico Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

**Rhode Island**

The Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence

**South Carolina**

Alston Wilkes Society  
The Children's Trust of South Carolina

**South Dakota**

Parents Who Care Coalition

**Tennessee**

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

**Texas**

Texas Criminal Justice Coalition

**Utah**

Utah Commission on Criminal Justice and Juvenile Justice

## **Virginia**

Barrios Unidos – Virginia Chapter

Families & Allies of Virginia's Youth

JustChildren

Keeping Our Kids Safe: The Newport News Violence Prevention Network

Mid-Atlantic Juvenile Defender Center, Juvenile Law and Policy Clinic, University of Richmond School of Law

The Center for Community Development, Inc.

The S.T.O.P. Family Investment Center at Oakmont North

Virginia Coalition for Juvenile Justice

Virginia Commonwealth University School of Education

Virginia Commonwealth University Center for School-Community Collaboration

Virginia CURE (VA)

## **Washington**

Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

Washington Defender Association

Washington Defender Association's Immigration Project

## **Wisconsin**

ATTIC Correctional Services, Inc.

Wisconsin Council on Children and Families

## **Local Jurisdictions (12)**

City of East Cleveland (OH)

City of Hampton (VA)

City of Los Angeles (CA)

City of New York (NY)

City of Newport News (VA)

City of Norfolk (VA)

City of Pasadena (CA)

City of Philadelphia (PA)

City of Pittsburgh (PA)

City of Portsmouth (VA)

City of Richmond (VA)

City and County of San Francisco (CA)

County of Santa Fe (NM)

## **Elected Officials and Academics (10)**

Leroy D. Baca, Sheriff, County of Los Angeles (CA)

Donna M. Bishop, Northeastern University (MA)

Susan J. Carstens, Psy.D., L.P. Juvenile Specialist, Crystal Police Dept. (MN)

The Honorable Toni Harp, Connecticut State Senator

The Honorable Alice L. Bordsen, North Carolina State Representatives

Jolanta Juskiewicz, Ph.D., American University (D.C.)

The Honorable Kelvin Roldán, Connecticut State Representative

Tony Roshan Samara, George Mason University (VA)

Earle Williams, Psy.D. Hampton University, (VA)

Aaron Kupchik, Ph.D., University of Delaware



