

January 27, 2008

Rep. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Virginia 3rd District
1201 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

I am writing on behalf of the Richmond Peace Education Center, a non-partisan nonprofit organization with over 1,000 members in the Richmond, Virginia area, to express strong support for the Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education ("Youth PROMISE") Act (H.R. 3846).

This legislation addresses the root causes of youth delinquency and provides evidence-based resources to divert youth from gang and crime activities. It provides a comprehensive prevention strategy that draws on the expertise of key stakeholders to develop local intervention plans.

Our organization, the Richmond Peace Education Center, works to promote alternatives to violence locally and globally. Among our many programs, we work closely with Richmond-area teenagers through our Richmond Youth Peace Project (RYPP), a violence prevention and leadership program that teaches teenagers effective conflict-resolution skills, and provides them leadership and organizing opportunities, and opportunities for creative self expression.

In our work with youth, we have observed the need for comprehensive prevention services, and the importance of targeting resources both to the youth most at risk, as well as those at the margins of criminal activities. This bill has the potential to fundamentally change our country's approach to youth delinquency and gang involvement, and to reduce incarceration rates.

This bill builds on Rep. Scott's long history of effective engagement in community, youth, and justice issues in Virginia's third congressional district.

Adria Scharf
Executive Director



Richmond Peace Education Center