



# FIRST FOCUS

CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN

July 12, 2012

The Honorable Robert C. Scott  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative Scott:

I am writing on behalf of the First Focus Campaign for Children, a bipartisan advocacy organization committed to making children, youth and their families a priority in federal policy and budget decisions, to express our support for HR. 2721, the **Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education (Youth Promise) Act**. The legislation brings greater focus on evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies to address juvenile delinquency and dissolve the school to prison pipeline.

The legislation amends the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 to establish a PROMISE Advisory Panel to assist the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in: assessing and developing standards and evidence-based practices to prevent juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity, and collecting data in designated geographic areas to assess the needs and existing resources for juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity prevention and intervention. The authorization for PROMISE grants further recognizes the importance for individualized approaches throughout various communities and for the provision of particular services for youths with a unique set of needs.

In doing so, we not only encourage a shared responsibility among all levels of government and communities to address youth violence, we also shift the model toward prevention and early intervention. We applaud the Congressman's leadership by calling for investments in quality evidence-based prevention and intervention programs for young children and youth (especially early childhood education, voluntary home visiting, mentoring programs, mental health services, job training and school-based programs) through the PROMISE grants and by calling on government agencies and community stakeholders to work in concert to implement these evidence-based strategies.

Our nation needs, and our children deserve, a comprehensive approach to youth violence prevention and intervention. We thank you for your efforts and ask that you to convene hearings to broaden the nation's understanding of meaningful partnerships that address the comprehensive needs of children and youth in order to reduce youth violence. The **Youth Promise Act** provides an ideal opportunity to strategically engage communities in the development of violence prevention and intervention strategies so our children and youth can realize their full potential.

Sincerely,

Bruce Lesley  
President  
First Focus Campaign for Children