

Penal Reform International

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Washington DC 20005



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By Fax :

January 28, 2008

Members
US House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Re : H.R. 3846 Youth PROMISE Act

Dear Representative :

Penal Reform International (PRI) advocates for a rational approach to criminal and juvenile justice founded on evidence-based approaches to increase public safety. We therefore strongly support H.R. 3846, the Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support and Education (PROMISE) Act, introduced by Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA).

Over recent years, a large body of research has greatly increased our understanding of the most effective ways to intervene in the lives of youth who are most likely to join gangs or to come into conflict with the law. Unfortunately, we do not always take advantage of this knowledge when developing juvenile and criminal justice policy. The Youth PROMISE Act is based on the best available research and informed understanding of the most effective prevention and intervention programs, including strategic policing practices, to reduce gang violence and crime.

The local councils encouraged under the Act are a particularly important feature – bringing together the key groups with knowledge and services appropriate to the needs of at-risk young people to develop interventions appropriate to the local community. This support for the people and groups with the best understanding of specific local needs is a key aspect to developing successful crime-reduction programs.

We urge you to support the Youth PROMISE Act and the advancement of proven, cost-effective, locally designed, crime reduction policies that best protect our communities and our children.

Sincerely,

Jenni Gainsborough

Jenni Gainsborough
Director, Washington Office