



www.YouthPROMISEAction.org

Sponsored by The Peace Alliance & Student Peace Alliance

Factsheet: Overview & Key Highlights

Youth PROMISE Act (H.R. 1064/S. 435)

“Youth Prison Reduction Through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support and Education Act”

SUMMARY: *The bipartisan Youth PROMISE Act will fill a major gap in our nation’s criminal justice-centered approach to youth delinquency, crime and violence – providing critical support for hard hit communities to invest in evidence-based, locally-driven prevention and intervention practices that engage and divert at-risk youth proactively before they commit crimes or acts of violence in the first place, and before they slip into a crushing cycle of crime, arrest and incarceration.*

Research has shown that proactive, community-based strategies such as mentoring and after-school programs reduce crime more effectively and at a much lower cost than our current approach, under which we wait for a crime or violence to occur, then react by funneling youth through a punishing minefield of arrest, prosecution and incarceration.

The Youth PROMISE Act will pre-empt this cycle and save crucial taxpayer funds by empowering communities to implement custom-tailored prevention and intervention strategies, while holding them accountable by linking funding to proven metric success.

Key Elements

1. Proven Prevention & Intervention Practices
2. Locally Controlled Community Plans
3. Will Cost Less than Youth Incarceration
4. Strict Oversight & Accountability
5. Funding Linked to Measurable Success

What the Legislation Will Do

The Youth PROMISE Act will:

- **Fund, implement and rigorously evaluate** proven and promising, evidence-based, locally controlled youth violence prevention and intervention strategies.
- **Hold communities accountable** by regularly measuring program effectiveness, linking funding to proven metric success and requiring that at least 85% of funding be spent directly on programs.
- **Create a PROMISE Advisory Panel** of state representatives to aid in assessing community needs and resources, developing and enforcing evaluation standards and overseeing implementation.
- **Engage a wide range of community stakeholders to serve on local PROMISE Coordinating Councils**, which will develop and implement custom PROMISE Plans for their community. The Councils will include:
 - Community and Faith-Based Groups
 - Schools, Parents and Youth
 - Courts and Law Enforcement
 - Health Providers, Social Services and Others
- **Build on local strengths** by partnering with colleges and universities as regional research partners, and share research by setting up a **National Research Center for Proven Juvenile Justice Practices**.
- Provide support for communities to hire and train **youth-oriented police officers**.

Quick Facts

House Bill: H.R. 1064/Senate Bill: S. 435

LEAD SPONSORS

House: Rep. Robert “Bobby” Scott (D-VA)
Rep. Michael Castle (R-DE)

Senate: Sen. Robert Casey (D-PA)
Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME)

Please visit www.thomas.gov for a complete list of bill cosponsors.

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

House: Judiciary (Passed 17-14 on 12/2/09)
Education & Labor (Needs Hearing)

Senate: Judiciary (Needs Hearing)

Who Supports It?

- The US Conference of Mayors
- A coalition of more than 250 national, state and local organizations
- City Councils of Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Richmond, VA, among others
- Los Angeles County Sheriff Leroy D. Baca

For a complete list of endorsing organizations, officials, and other supporters of the Youth PROMISE Act, please visit: www.YouthPROMISEAction.org



www.YouthPROMISEAction.org

Sponsored by The Peace Alliance &
Student Peace Alliance

Factsheet: Assessing the Need

Youth PROMISE Act (H.R. 1064/S. 435)

“Youth Prison Reduction Through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support and Education Act”

Youth Violence Widespread, Punitive Approach Not Working

Despite spending billions of dollars each year to arrest, prosecute and incarcerate juveniles in the United States, youth delinquency, crime and violence remain widespread. The focus on costly, ineffective and punitive enforcement strategies such as incarceration has been shown to expose troubled youth to harmful influences, increase school dropout rates and recidivism, make it harder to get a job and cost significantly more than under-funded, proactive, community-based prevention and intervention practices and alternatives to detention, such as mentoring, job-training and afterschool programs. The numbers show an urgent need to revisit and revise our current policies to invest in what works: addressing the root causes to prevent crime and violence in the first place. The Youth PROMISE Act will be a critical first step.

Statistics on Youth Violence:

Pervasive School Violence¹

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, during the 2007-08 school year:

- 36 percent of high school students said they had been in a fight during the past 12 months, and
- 8 percent said they had been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property
- 32 percent of students ages 12–18 reported having been bullied, and
- 23 percent reported gangs at their schools

Catastrophic Social Impact

According to U.S. government reports:

- Homicide is the second leading cause of death for young people ages 10–24. For African-American youth, homicide is the **leading** cause of death.²
- In 2008, youth ages 12–19 were victims of more than 1.3 million reported incidents of violence.³
- Nearly 50% of children surveyed in a comprehensive 2008 study said they were assaulted at least once in the past year.⁴

Mass Arrests & Incarceration^{5,6}

- In 2008, there were 2.1 million arrests of youth under the age of 18, including 96,000 for serious violent crimes and 230,000 for other assaults.
- African-American youth represent 16% percent of the U.S. juvenile population, but account for 52% of arrests for violent crime, and 40% of youth held in long-term detention.
- In 2006, 93,000 juveniles were incarcerated or held in residential detention centers – the vast majority for nonviolent offenses

Unsustainable Cost⁷

- States spend roughly \$5.7 billion each year imprisoning youth, at an average cost of \$240/day per youth (\$87,600/year).
- A growing number of studies show that incarcerating young people has significant immediate and long-term negative employment and economic outcomes for individuals and their communities.

To learn more, visit: www.YouthPROMISEAction.org.

¹ *Indicators of School Crime & Safety: 2009* (National Center for Education Statistics)

² *Youth Violence: Facts at a Glance, 2009* (Centers for Disease Control)

³ *National Crime Victimization Survey, 2008* (The Bureau of Justice Statistics)

⁴ *Children's Exposure to Violence: A Comprehensive National Survey, 2009* (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention)

⁵ *Crime in the United States, 2008* (Federal Bureau of Investigation)

⁶ *OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book, 2006* (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention)

⁷ *The Dangers of Detention, 2006* (Justice Policy Institute)



www.YouthPROMISEAction.org

Sponsored by The Peace Alliance &
Student Peace Alliance

Factsheet: Official Bill Summary

Youth PROMISE Act (H.R. 1064)

“Youth Prison Reduction Through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support and Education Act”

The Youth PROMISE ACT:

- 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: (1) assessing and developing standards and **evidence-based** practices to prevent juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity; and (2) **collecting data** in designated geographic areas to assess the needs and existing resources for juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity prevention and intervention.
- Authorizes the Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to award grants to local governments and Indian tribes to: (1) plan and assess evidence-based and promising practices for juvenile delinquency and criminal gang activity prevention and intervention, especially for youth; and (2) implement **PROMISE plans, developed by local PROMISE Coordinating Councils (PCCs)**, for coordinating and supporting juvenile delinquency and gang prevention/intervention programs in local communities.
- Establishes a **National Research Center for Proven Juvenile Justice Practices** to provide PCCs and the public with current research and other information about evidence based practices related to juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang prevention and intervention.
- Directs the Administrator to award grants to: (1) allow institutions of higher education to serve as regional research partners with PCCs; and (2) hire and train law enforcement officers as youth-oriented police to work with PCCs, other community-based organizations, and high-risk youth. Establishes a **Center for Youth-Oriented Policing**.
- Mynisha's Law – Authorizes any local government or Indian Tribe with a PCC to submit an application to the Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention for designation as a **Comprehensive Gang Prevention and Relief Area**.
- Authorizes the Attorney General to award **grants to partnerships comprising state mental health authorities and local or private entities** to prevent or alleviate the effects of youth violence in urban communities with a high or increasing incidence of such violence.
- Prevention Resources for Eliminating Criminal Activity Using Tailored Interventions in Our Neighborhoods Act of 2009 – or the PRECAUTION Act – Establishes the **National Commission on Public Safety Through Crime and Delinquency Prevention** to: (1) carry out a comprehensive study of the effectiveness of certain crime and delinquency prevention and intervention strategies; and (2) make initial and final reports on such strategies to specified federal and state officials.
- Authorizes the Director of the National Institute of Justice to make three-year grants to public and private entities for the implementation and evaluation of **innovative crime or delinquency prevention or intervention strategies**.
- Amends the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 to authorize grants for the creation and expansion of state, local, and **tribal juvenile witness and victim protection grants**.

This official summary courtesy of the Library of Congress at <http://thomas.loc.gov>