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Factsheet: Evidence-Based Solutions

Youth PROMISE Act (H.R. 2197, S. 1770)

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

Prevention & Intervention Cost Less, Work Better

Local communities across the country are taking the lead in developing and implementing innovative, evidence-based prevention and intervention practices that engage and divert at-risk youth proactively before they slip into a costly cycle of crime, violence and incarceration. These community-based practices have been shown to reduce rates of youth delinquency, crime and violence more effectively and at a substantially lower cost than criminal enforcement and incarceration, but their current reach is limited by inadequate and sporadic funding and the absence of a comprehensive framework to engage community stakeholders, evaluate program effectiveness, collect data and coordinate and share research. The Youth PROMISE Act will meet this need, building on local strengths to invest in what works.

The Youth PROMISE Act will support proven and promising, locally driven prevention and intervention practices, including:

- **Youth and adolescent development services**, such as job training, apprenticeships, mentoring and afterschool programs, conflict resolution and life skills training, and alternative school resources for youth who have dropped out of school or demonstrate chronic truancy.
- **Early childhood development**, early childhood prevention, parenting and healthy relationship skills training, child abuse prevention programs, Early Head Start and Head Start.
- **Child protection and safety services**, such as foster care and adoption assistance programs, family stabilization programs and family violence intervention programs.
- **Health and mental health services**, including cognitive behavioral therapy and peer mentoring and counseling
- **Substance abuse counseling** and treatment
- **Emergency, transitional and permanent housing assistance**, such as safe shelter and housing for runaway and homeless youth.
- **Targeted gang prevention, intervention and exit services** such as tattoo removal, successful models of anti-gang crime outreach and other criminal street gang truce or peacemaking activities.
- **Training and education programs for pregnant teens** and teen parents
- **Restorative justice programs**
- **Alternatives to detention and confinement programs**, such as mandated participation in community service, restitution, counseling and intensive individual and family therapy
- **Pre-release, post-release, and reentry services** to assist detained and incarcerated youth with transitioning back into the community

Key Statistic:

- A major study by the non-partisan Washington State Institute for Public Policy found that for every dollar spent on county juvenile detention systems, \$1.98 of “benefits” was achieved in terms of reduced crime and costs of crime to taxpayers. By contrast, diversion and mentoring programs produced **\$3.36 of benefits** for every dollar spent, aggression replacement training produced **\$10 of benefits** for every dollar spent, and multi-systemic therapy produced **\$13 of benefits** for every dollar spent.¹

¹ *The Juvenile Justice System in Washington State: Recommendations to Improve Cost-Effectiveness, 2002*