

June 2015 Action

**Write Letter/Email to your Two Senators, and also Call their DC Offices,
Urging them both to contact Sen. James Inhofe and become
Initial Co-Sponsors of the Youth PROMISE Act.**

The lead Senate sponsors of the Youth PROMISE Act are looking for strong bi-partisan support – and you can help! The bill currently has no bill number, but your Senators can contact the office of one of the lead Senate sponsors – Senator James Inhofe (R-OK) – and become an initial co-sponsor. You can call your Member's local area office and also the D.C. office via the **Congressional switchboard (202)224-3121**, for good measure.

Making stronger, safer communities – using proven peacebuilding tools – and ending epidemics of youth incarceration and violence – is what this action is about.

Both letters and phone calls can be very brief – most important is that you DO IT!!

Preparation:

1. Please ascertain whether your Senator was a co-sponsor during the last session – if s/he was, you can thank him/her, and s/he will be far more likely to sign on as an initial co-sponsor in this session. a. At www.peacealliance.org/ypa-sponsors you can see last session's co-sponsors.
2. Most Senators have a contact form on their website that allows you to submit a typed letter. On their site you can also find phone contact information. Today we ask you to send email and also make a phone call.
3. Critical Follow-up: Call to emphasize the importance of your message, to seek to learn your Member's thoughts/feelings about the bill, and possibly to schedule a time to meet in-person. Please call both their D.C. office, and also the office nearest you – it is worthwhile to build relationships with local staffers, and also with the issue specialists in Washington.

Letter Outline (please personalize, so every letter isn't the same)

1. Introduce yourself briefly (I am a grandmother/teacher/student/etc.)
2. Speak from your heart. Share any relevant personal story(s) about why this issue is important to you. Do you know any youth who have been impacted by violence? Have you been particularly affected or moved by the tragic waste of youth incarceration? Are you aware of any local, regional, or national resources that reduce violence/incarceration among youth? (see some examples below).
3. Share some statistics on violence prevention and incarceration (see below).
4. Call to Action: IMPORTANT - Thank your Senators if they co-sponsored the bill in the last session, and ask them to become initial cosponsors in this current session. Request that they respond to you, so you know what position they are taking on the bill. This helps them form an official stance, which could make it more of a priority. (help them become more of a CHAMPION!) .

Sample Talking Points

YPA Bill: Youth PROMISE Act (Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education) is bipartisan legislation that will give our communities the support and funding they need to effectively address youth violence issues. By specifically focusing on violence prevention and intervention strategies, this bill ensures we are funding programs that save lives and give every young person the opportunity to meet his or her potential.

The lead sponsors of the House version of the bill (number is HR 2197) are Bobby Scott (D-VA), Walter Jones (R-NC), Tony Cardenas (D-CA), and Trey Gowdy (R-SC).

The Challenges:

Approximately 93,000 young people are currently in detention in the US, most of them costing taxpayers over \$80,000 per person per year.

On average, the annual cost of violence related only to paying for police, justice, corrections and the productivity effect of violent crime, homicide and robbery is \$3,257 for each U.S. taxpayer or \$460 billion for the United States economy.

Bonus: Share any details you know or can research about violence/incarceration in your community/state. Youth incarceration costs? Youth crime rates? A Google search can find a lot.

Example Solutions YPA might amplify:

In Chicago, the Becoming a Man program, which places disadvantaged boys from 7th-10th grade into mentoring relationships, saw among their participants a 44 percent drop in arrests for violent crime and an up to 23 percent increase in graduation rates.

Pennsylvania tried a similar approach to what the Youth PROMISE Act could support, and over a ten year period they saved \$5 for every \$1 invested.¹ Due to the shrinking number of detainees, they were able to close a 100-bed juvenile detention facility.

Diversion and mentoring programs produce \$3.36 of benefits for every dollar spent, aggression replacement training produces \$10 of benefits for every dollar spent, and Functional Family therapy produces \$18 of benefits for every dollar spent.

If you are aware of any **proven or promising local solutions**, please share them!!!

More quotable statistics and citations at: www.peacealliance.org/stats

¹ Bumbarger, Jones, et al., "The Economic return on PCCD's Investment in Research-based Programs: A Cost-Benefit Assessment of Delinquency and Prevention in Pennsylvania", The Prevention Research Center for the Promotion of Human Development, Penn State, March 2008, p. 3
http://www.prevention.psu.edu/pubs/docs/PCCD_Report2.pdf

