

## November 2015 Action

### Rally Republican Support for the Youth PROMISE Act With an Email and Follow-up Phone Call

To your **Nearest Republican Congressman(s) who is not yet a co-sponsor!**

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

While YPA's introduction was strongly bi-partisan in both the House and the Senate – this powerful bill needs more conservative support – and YOU CAN HELP! If you have one or more **Republican Senators, or a Republican House Member**, or there is a Republican House Member whose district is close by (and/or you have friends in a district with a Republican House Member), **any and all of those** could be your targets – for an **email and follow-up phone call with a request**.

**Request:** Co-sponsor the bill - **S.1770/HR. 2197 - Cong. switchboard (202)224-3121**  
**E-mails and phone calls can be very brief – most important is that you DO IT!!**

#### Preparation:

1. Choose the nearest Republican lawmaker(s)! Your Senator(s)? House Member? Neighboring House Member? (will you ask friends in their district?)
2. Please ascertain if your target lawmaker(s) are co-sponsors (unlikely) - you can check this by bill name or number (S 1770, HR 2197) at [www.congress.gov](http://www.congress.gov).
3. If the nearest Republican(s) are already co-sponsors, look farther away! You can google search "(state name) House Members" to see a list.
4. Review this Action Sheet for inspiration/information about the YPA, and the need.
5. Most Congress Members 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 key, follow-up phone call**.
6. Critical Follow-up: Call to emphasize your request, to seek to learn your target Member's thoughts/feelings about the bill, and possibly to schedule a time to meet in-person. Please call their D.C. office, and ask for the staff member most concerned with issues involving youth, education, and/or juvenile justice.

#### Letter (email) 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?
3. Share some statistics on violence prevention and incarceration (see below).
4. Call to Action: Ask for Co-sponsorship. And request that they respond to you.

### 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 and incarceration 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:** **House** - Bobby Scott (D-VA), **Walter Jones (R-NC)**, Tony Cardenas (D-CA), and **Trey Gowdy (R-SC)**. **Senate** - Bob Casey (D-PA), **James Inhofe (R-OK)**, Gary Peters (D-MI), and **David Vitter (R-LA)**.

### **The Challenges:**

The US imprisons more youth per capita than the next 12 industrialized nations combined, and is the only one imprisoning juveniles for life without possibility of parole.

Nearly 60 percent of boys classified as bullies in grades six through nine were convicted of at least one crime by age 24. 40 percent had three or more convictions by age 24.<sup>1</sup>

African-American youth are nearly five times as likely to be confined as their white peers. Latino and American Indian youth are between two and three times as likely to be confined. Our system treats youth of color, particularly African Americans and Latinos, more punitively than similar white youth<sup>2</sup>

### **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.<sup>3</sup>

Pennsylvania tried a similar approach to the Youth PROMISE Act, and over a ten year period they saved \$5 for every \$1 invested.<sup>4</sup> Due to the shrinking number of detainees, they were able to close a 100-bed juvenile detention facility.

Training in parenting skills, for parents of children exhibiting aggressive behavior, was estimated about three times as cost-effective as the “three-strikes” law in California.<sup>5</sup>

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

More quotable statistics and citations at: [www.peacealliance.org/stats](http://www.peacealliance.org/stats)

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<sup>1</sup> “Bullying Prevention is Crime Prevention,” Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2003

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-YouthIncarcerationInfographic-2013.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.youth-guidance.org/our-programs/b-a-m-becoming-a-man/>

<sup>4</sup> 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](http://www.prevention.psu.edu/pubs/docs/PCCD_Report2.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Greenwood PW et al. Diverting children from a life of crime: measuring costs and benefits. Rand, 1996.