

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING CONGRESSIONAL BILLS H.R. 1064 AND S. 435, THE YOUTH PRISON REDUCTION THROUGH OPPORTUNITY, MENTORING, INTERVENTION, SUPPORT AND EDUCATION ACT (YOUTH PROMISE ACT) TO ADDRESS YOUTH GANG AND CRIME CHALLENGES.**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Portsmouth is committed to insuring that youth lead productive, safe, healthy, gang-free and law-abiding lives; and

**WHEREAS**, evidence-based and promising practices related to juvenile delinquency and criminal street crime activity prevention and intervention are needed to help build resiliency in youth and individual, family, and community strength; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Portsmouth, Virginia has witnessed an increase in youth-gang presence and gang activity over the past two years; and

**WHEREAS**, in the City of Portsmouth, this youth-gang activity has resulted in an increase in vandalism, burglaries, robberies, and murders; and

**WHEREAS**, the Portsmouth Police Department has developed a Gang-Squad which has been actively working with civic, community, and school groups and other governmental entities to reach out to youth and educate them about the lifetime perils associated with gang membership and criminal gang activity; and

**WHEREAS**, a recent youth summit in the City demonstrated the need for more education and outreach became evident when a youth participant stated that gangs offer power, money and respect; and

**WHEREAS**, the citizens of Portsmouth lament that too many of our youth are adhering to this gang philosophy and mentality leading to a loss of too many of our youth to jail, life-time disabilities, jail or prison; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Portsmouth, Virginia recognizes and acknowledges that our youth are our future; and

**WHEREAS**, H.R. 1064/ S. 435, the Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support and Education Act (Youth PROMISE Act) introduced by Representatives Robert "Bobby" Scott and Michael Castle on February 13, 2009, and its companion bill S.435 introduced by Senators Robert Casey and Olympia Snow would amend the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 and the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994; and

**WHEREAS**, the Youth PROMISE Act establishes a PROMISE Advisory Panel to assist the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in:

- Addressing and developing standards and evidence-based practices to prevent juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity;
- Collecting data in designated geographic area to assess the needs and existing resources for juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity prevention and intervention; and

**WHEREAS**, the Youth PROMISE Act authorizes grants to local governments to:

- Plan, assess, and implement PROMISE plans and programs for juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity prevention and intervention, especially for at-risk youth in local comities;
- Hire and train law enforcement officers as youth-oriented police to work with local PROMISE Coordinating Councils, other community based organizations, and high-risk youth in local communities;
- Extend and increase funding for juvenile accountability block grants through Fiscal Year 2013;
- Create and expand state, local, and tribal juvenile witness and victim protection programs; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2007, the Average Daily Membership for students in the Portsmouth, Virginia Public Schools was 14,819, with 50% of this student body deemed At-Risk; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Portsmouth, a city of only 29 square miles, has the highest real estate tax rate in the Hampton Roads, Virginia region as a result of the presence of tax-exempt federal and state facilities constituting more than 50% of the city's area;

**WHEREAS**, the City of Portsmouth, Virginia is deemed the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) most fiscally stressed locality in the Commonwealth of Virginia; and

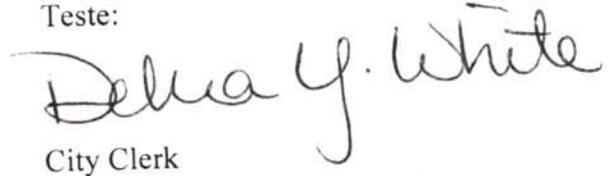
**WHREAS**, with the passage of these bills the City of Portsmouth may be eligible to receive additional resources to help the City's gang prevention and intervention efforts;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City Council of Portsmouth, Virginia hereby expresses its full support of H.R. 1064 and S. 435, the Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education Act (Youth PROMISE Act), which would provide funding for evidence-based and promising practices related to juvenile delinquency and criminal street-gang activity and prevention and intervention to help build individual, family and community strength and youth resiliency to ensure that the City's young people might have the ability to lead productive, safe, healthy, gang-free and law-abiding lives.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City Clerk is hereby **DIRECTED** to send a copy of the foregoing resolution to all members of the Congressional delegation from the Commonwealth of Virginia and to the sponsors of H.R. 1064 and S. 435.

**ADOPTED** by the Council of the City of Portsmouth, Virginia at a meeting held on May 26, 2009.

Teste:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Delia Y. White". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed title "City Clerk".

City Clerk