

# **DEMOCRATS**

*for* **EDUCATION REFORM**

503 2<sup>nd</sup> St., NE  
Washington, DC 20002

August 17, 2011

Representative Robert C. Scott  
1201 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

## **Democrats for Education Reform Letter of Support for the Youth PROMISE Act - H.R. 2721**

Dear Congressman Scott:

We at Democrats for Education Reform (DFER) are writing to convey our strong support for the Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education –i.e., Youth PROMISE - Act, H.R. 2721, introduced on August 1<sup>st</sup> 2011.

Far too many children, particularly minority children and those from low-income families, have been sucked into the cradle-to-prison pipeline. According to the Children's Defense Fund, 1 in 3 Black and 1 in 6 Latino boys are at risk of imprisonment during their lifetimes. These are appalling statistics that call for urgent, intensive, and sustained action. The Youth PROMISE Act would provide communities with the organization, planning, and tools they need to steer children away from a path toward prison and onto a path toward college, careers, and citizenship.

We believe that two key strengths of bill involve: 1) its insistence on evidence-based programs that prevent and curtail juvenile delinquency and criminal gang activity, and 2) its emphasis on broad-based interdisciplinary councils that incorporate key figures from inside and

outside the education and juvenile justice systems and from both the government and non-governmental sectors.

There should be no higher domestic policy priority than providing a safe and a bright future for all our nation's children. All of us must accept the responsibility that it is the decisions we make now that will determine the trajectory of young peoples' lives toward fulfillment and success or crime and incarceration. Because it is based on sound approaches that have proven successful in communities across the country, the Youth PROMISE Act has the potential, if enacted, to make that difference.

It is for these reasons that we so strongly support the Youth PROMISE Act and offer whatever help we might be able to provide to get it enacted and funded. Please let us know if there is any way we may be of assistance. Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,



Charles Barone  
Director of Federal Policy  
Democrats for Education Reform

*cc:*

Rep. John Conyers, Jr.  
Rep. Walter B. Jones, Jr.  
Rep. Steven C. LaTourette  
Rep. Donald M. Payne