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 1st 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. Steven C. LaTourette
Rep. Donald M. Payne