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# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CRIMINAL DEFENSE LAWYERS

January 16, 2008

Members  
US House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Representative:

The National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers fully supports H.R. 3846, the Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education Act (Youth PROMISE Act). It is a distinct pleasure for our organization to express its support for Representative Bobby Scott's bill and to urge you to do the same. We have so often seen youth justice legislation take the form of misguided, often reactionary, and overly harsh legislation focused more on prosecution than prevention or protection. The Youth PROMISE Act relies on and demands proven, evidence-based tactics to save at-risk kids from a life of crime and spare their communities the plight of gang violence.

"Tough on Crime" rhetoric and worse, legislation, has a proven track record of failure and has helped to bring our country onto the brink of an incarceration crisis. So much gang legislation has relied on increased and complicated sentencing while leaving those working on the ground to prevent, rather than just punish, gang activity to struggle alone and underfunded. The Youth PROMISE Act will bring together law enforcement, court, social, and school services, and countless others working to prevent gang activity from their separate spheres and unite their common efforts. We hope this bill will begin to shift our national conversation on crime away from reactionary rhetoric and toward evidence-based, "smart on crime" solutions.

Again, on behalf of NACDL, I urge you to support and co-sponsor the Youth PROMISE Act. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Carmen D. Hernandez  
President

"LIBERTY'S LAST CHAMPION"

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