

## **Resolution Reaffirming Support of the Youth Promise Act**

**Issue:** Support for the Youth Promise Act to provide support and funding for evidence based practices to prevent delinquent behavior.

**Adopted Policy:** NACo supports the basic concepts and principles contained in the Youth Promise Act and urges Congress and the President to promptly enact the legislation.

**Background:** In the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, Congressmen C. “Bobby” Scott (D-Va.) and Michael Castle (R-Del.) and Senators Robert Casey (D-Pa.) and Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) have re-introduced the Youth Promise Act (H.R. 1064/S. 435). The Youth Promise Act is grounded in more than thirty years of research and will support communities facing the greatest youth gang and crime challenges.

Under the Youth Promise Act, communities will form Promise Councils that include representatives from county government, law enforcement, court services, schools, social services, health and mental health providers, and community-based organizations, including faith-based organizations. Promise Councils will develop a comprehensive plan (Promise Plan) for implementing evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies in their local community, reflective of the particular opportunities and challenges confronting the community. Finally, the Act will provide critical training and technical assistance to local law enforcement to help them more effectively and positively engage youth, and respond effectively and appropriately to risky or unlawful youth behavior.

The funds authorized under the Act will be given directly to units of local government or Indian Tribes and subject to local control. The strategies supported by the Youth Promise Act will be targeted at young people who are at-risk of becoming involved or are involved in delinquent and criminal gang activity including substance abuse, alcoholism and mental health issues so as to redirect them toward productive and law-abiding alternatives. In addition, the Youth Promise Act will strengthen the coordination of all federal prevention programs and further national research on evidenced-based and promising practices in delinquency and crime prevention.

Coordinated efforts of stakeholders in the juvenile justice system in a local community, together with other organizations and community members concerned with the safety and welfare of children, have a strong record of demonstrated success in reducing the impact of youth and gang-related crime and violence. Every dollar invested in prevention and early intervention programs can yield up to \$13 in criminal justice costs-savings. In addition, investments in prevention and intervention programs for children and youth has been shown to lead to decreased youth arrests, decreased delinquency, lower recidivism and greater financial savings. On December 2, 2009 the House Judiciary Committee voted to report the bill favorably to the whole House of Representatives by a vote of 17-14. The Senate has not yet acted.

**Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** The prevention strategies outlined in the Act will save counties many millions of dollars.

Adopted July 20, 2010