

February 16, 2014

The Honorable Mary Landrieu
United States Senate
703 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James Inhofe
United States Senate
205 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bobby Scott
United States House of Representative
1201 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Walter Jones
United States House of Representatives
2333 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Landrieu and Inhofe and Representatives Scott and Jones:

We write in support of your legislation, the Youth Promise Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education Act, S.1307/H.R.1318 (PROMISE Act).

As we have learned first-hand through ministry to those in juvenile and adult corrections facilities, many individuals currently involved in the criminal justice system did not receive strong moral guidance through their family, church, or community networks. Mentorship and other support systems play a critical role in our work to help justice-involved youth and adults transform their lives. As studies demonstrate, these ingredients are also crucial to prevent young people from engaging in delinquent behavior in the first place.

Accordingly, we are pleased to endorse the PROMISE Act, which implements evidence-based youth and gang violence prevention and intervention programs and creates an advisory panel of state representatives to assess community needs and resources and oversee program implementation. The legislation also establishes a National Research Center for Proven Juvenile Justice Practices in partnership with universities.

We support amending the House bill to mirror Senate companion provisions that link PROMISE to existing Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program grant funds and require grant recipients to increase reliance on non-federal funding. By providing temporary resources to equip the “laboratories of democracy” to develop unique evidence-based delinquency prevention and intervention programs, the PROMISE Act will help establish effective programs that will achieve sustainability. This short-term investment will not only yield significant cost-savings, but will spare families from being torn apart by the consequences of both victimization and incarceration.

We look forward to continuing to partner with you to advance this legislation. Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

Craig DeRoche
President
Justice Fellowship

Galen Carey
Vice President
National Association of Evangelicals