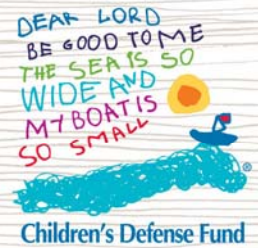


Children's Defense Fund Summary of the Youth PROMISE Act (H.R. 1064/S. 435)



July 2009

The *Youth PROMISE Act* (YPA) was reintroduced in the 111th Congress by Representatives Bobby Scott (D-VA) and Mike Castle (R-DE) in the House and Senators Bob Casey (D-PA) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME) in the Senate, and is a hopeful response to CDF's Cradle to Prison Pipeline® Crusade. The bipartisan *Youth PROMISE Act* recognizes that steps need to be taken away from ineffective policies that focus on punishment and incarceration and toward policies that focus on evidence-based prevention and intervention to address juvenile delinquency. The provisions of the bill are highlighted below.

Focus Resources on Communities and Youths Most in Need and Recognize the Benefits of Individualized Approaches to Services and Treatment (Titles I & II)

- Creates PROMISE Advisory Panel to assess communities' current needs and prioritize areas with the greatest needs for assistance.
- Ensures precautions against inappropriate profiling of youths by structuring PROMISE grants to recognize the need for individualized approaches in different communities and for varying services and supports for youths with differing needs.

Promote Shared Responsibility Among All Levels of Government and Among Government, Communities, Families and Youths (Title II)

- Establishes PROMISE Coordinating Councils (PCCs) comprised of law enforcement, parents, community organizations and faith-based organizations who will:
 - Assess their own community's needs and strengths;
 - Evaluate current funding opportunities; and
 - Develop a comprehensive plan for implementing evidence-based and promising prevention and intervention strategies
- Enables PCCs to focus not only on prevention, but also to address the needs of youths already in the delinquency system.

Document the Cost Efficiencies in New Investments and Ensure Appropriate Reinvestment of Funds (Title II)

- Identifies cost efficiencies in new approaches implemented through PROMISE grants.
- Requires that investments made must be new investments over and above what the local entities would otherwise have available for these purposes.
- Requires savings sustained from the new investments in prevention and intervention to be reinvested in other activities in the PROMISE plan.
- Requires local investments to be maintained over time.

Shift the Paradigm Towards Prevention and Early Intervention (Titles II & IV)

- Invests in quality evidence-based prevention and intervention programs (such as early childhood, voluntary home visiting, mentoring, mental health, job training and school-based programs) through PROMISE grants.
- Engages and educates local law enforcement to help them embrace and implement these evidence-based strategies.

Maximize the Impact of Investments in Evidence-Based Practice and Promising Approaches by Ensuring the Ongoing Exchange of Information on Outcomes and Research Findings (Title III)

- Establishes a new National Research Center for Proven Juvenile Justice Practices that will keep abreast of local practices and notify PCCs and the public about research and other information on evidence-based and promising practices related to juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity prevention and intervention.
- Fosters collaboration between PCCs and institutions of higher education in their communities to promote helpful research to develop more effective policies and practices.

Promote Community-Based Youth-Oriented Policing Services (Title IV)

- Authorizes hiring and training of youth-oriented police officers within the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.
- Empowers youth-oriented police officers to work with PCCs, youth and other community organizations to increase the capacity of law enforcement to respond to juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity, as well as to incorporate new evidence-based and promising approaches implemented through PROMISE grants.
- Establishes Center for Youth-Oriented Policing to develop a model training program and support the adoption of new technologies related to the prioritization of delinquency and street gang activity, the safety of juveniles in custody, and the prevention of gun violence.

Give Special Attention to the Need for Comprehensive Gang Prevention and Relief (Titles IV & V)

- Identifies and designates communities at risk for gang activity as Comprehensive Gang Prevention and Relief Areas or High Intensity Gang Activity Areas that will be eligible for priority attention under several federal early childhood, at-risk youths, literacy, training, employment and crime control programs.
- Establishes Interagency Gang Prevention Task Force with representatives from the Departments of Justice, Education, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Housing and Urban Development to coordinate federal gang prevention activities.
- Authorizes Department of Justice to target gang prevention grants through its Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and make violence prevention grants to local communities.
- Authorizes the Attorney General to award grants to urban communities where there is a partnership between a state mental health agency and one or more local public or private providers.

Support the Need for Federal Leadership to Increase Federal Attention to Crime Prevention and Intervention in Existing Programs (Title VI)

- Via the PRECAUTION Act, establishes a National Commission on Public Safety through Crime and Delinquency Prevention, which will help to examine the extent to which the federal government's law enforcement plans are incorporating crime prevention strategies.
- Authorizes National Institute of Justice to provide funds to implement effective evidence-based strategies that can then be incorporated in existing federal programs.

Expand and Strengthen Existing Federal Juvenile Justice Laws and Initiatives (Title VII)

- Amends the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 to increase support for youth victim and witness protection programs.
- Amends the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 to expand the mentoring initiatives program for system-involved youths.
- Commissions study by the U.S. Sentencing Commission on adolescent development and the effectiveness of juvenile sentences, including life imprisonment without possibility of parole.