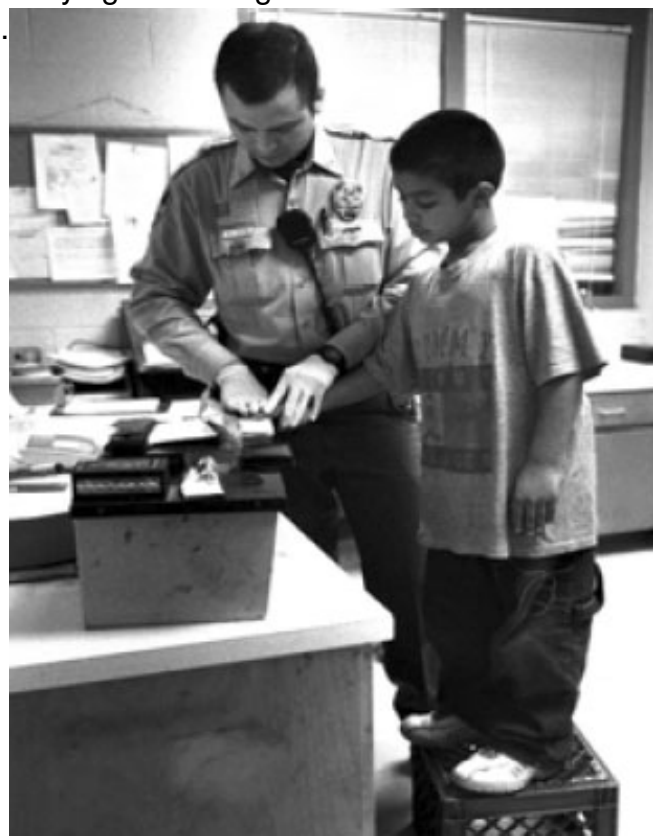
**Preventing Crime vs. "Playing Tough on Crime Politics"**

For decades, the primary response to crime has consisted of "tough on crime" sounding political slogans such as "three strikes and you're out" or "you do the adult crime, you do the adult time". As appealing as these policies may sound, the impact of codifying them ranges from a negligible reduction in crime to an actual increase in crime.



As a result of this over-emphasis on so-called "tough on crime" approaches, the U.S. now has the highest average incarceration rate of any nation in the world , by far. And the "tough on crime" approach has not been cheap. Corrections costs in this country have risen from around $7 Billion a year in 1980 to over $68 Billion in recent years. The impact of this focus on incarceration falls disproportionately on minorities, particularly Blacks and Hispanics. For Black boys born in 2001 and since, the Sentencing Project estimates that one in every three will end up incarcerated in their lifetime without appropriate intervention, a trajectory the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) has described as a "cradle-to-prison pipeline."

There is overwhelming evidence to show that children can move from a cradle to prison pipeline to a cradle to college and career pipeline. All the credible research shows that a continuum of comprehensive, evidenced-based prevention and intervention programs for youth at risk of, or involved in, delinquent behavior will greatly reduce crime and save much more than they cost when the avoided law enforcement and social welfare expenditures are considered. And the research reveals that these programs are most effective when provided in the context of a coordinated, collaborative local strategy involving law enforcement and other local public and private entities working with children identified as being at risk of involvement in the criminal justice system.

**The Youth PROMISE Model Prevents Crime and Saves Money**

Under the Youth PROMISE (Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education) Act, communities facing the greatest youth gang and crime challenges will be able to develop a comprehensive response to youth violence through a coordinated prevention and intervention response. Representatives from local law enforcement, the school system, court services, social services, health and mental health providers, the business community, and other public and private community and faith-based organizations will form a council to assess the problems and costs the community incurs as a result of youth violence, crime , and social welfare for teen pregnancy. The council will then develop a comprehensive plan for implementing evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies to address the problems and costs. The council will then ensure that the savings from implementing the programs are documented, so that some of the savings can be recaptured and applied to continue the program beyond the initial federal funding.

Nothing in the Youth PROMISE Act eliminates any of the current "tough on crime" laws. While it is understood that law enforcement will still continue to enforce those laws where necessary, research tells us that no matter how tough we are on the people we prosecute today, nothing will change unless we prevent the next generation of potential offenders from following the

same pattern.

The Youth PROMISE Act has been proven to not only reduce crime but also to save much more money than it costs. An example of an "evidence-based" program under the Youth PROMISE Act is reflected by the State of Pennsylvania which implemented a process very similar to the one provided for in the Youth PROMISE Act in 100 communities across the state. The state found that it saved, on average, $5 for every $1 spent during the study period. An example of a "promising" program under the Youth PROMISE Act is the Richmond, Virginia Gang Reduction and Intervention Program (GRIP), a DOJ pilot program funded through a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The program spent $2.5 million in a collaborative effort between the City of Richmond, federal, state and local partners focusing on a target community. In two years, major crimes in that target community were down 43% and homicides fell from 19 to 2.

**Federal Funding Not Intended to Be On-Going**

Cities that receive grants under the Youth PROMISE Act will be required to track governmental cost savings that accompany a drop in crime, and recapture a portion of those savings to keep the PROMISE programs alive after the federal grant period ends.

**Supporters**

In past Congresses, the Act has had broad, bipartisan support in both the House and Senate. There is also a coalition of over 250 national, state and local organizations that support the act. This coalition includes many cities and counties across the country that have passed resolutions in support, including Los Angeles, CA; Pasadena, CA; San Francisco, CA; Santa Fe County, NM; New York, NY; East Cleveland, OH; Pittsburgh, PA; Norfolk, VA; Newport News, VA; and Hampton, VA, and one state legislative body, the Vermont House of Representatives. In addition, the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National Association of Counties have adopted resolutions urging Congress to pass the Youth PROMISE Act. We continue to work to build momentum for the Act and to encourage members of the 113th Congress to support this bipartisan legislation by becoming a co-sponsor.

The Youth PROMISE Act represents a paradigm shift in the way we address juvenile crime policy in America. Instead of doing what is politically expedient, we have the opportunity to both reduce crime and save money.

**PDF Version**

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**Latest News**

- 04.18.13 | New York Times Editorial: Criminalizing Children at School
- 03.21.13 | Scott, Jones Introduce Youth PROMISE Act
- 03.20.13 | Huffington Post Blog By Robin Wright & Carol Chodroff: Time to Pass the Youth PROMISE Act
- 02.18.13 | New York Times: Prison and the Poverty Trap
- 01.25.13 | New York Times: Prison Population Can Shrink When Police Crowd Streets
- 01.22.13 | Rep. Scott convenes a Youth Violence Prevention Summit
- 01.09.13 | National Association of Counties urges White House Gun Violence Prevention Task Force to support enactment of the Youth PROMISE Act
- 12.11.12 | New York Times: For Lesser Crimes, Rethinking Life Behind Bars
- 11.17.12 | Video: Rep. Scott Participates in a Panel, titled "Stop the Pipeline to Prison," at Metropolitan African American Methodist Episcopal Church in Washington, DC

- 10.01.12 | School Climate Matters Op-Ed: A Better Direction: Changing the Trajectory of At-Risk Youth
- 09.21.12 | Video: Rep. Scott Participates in a Panel on Addressing Youth Violence in

Black America
- 07.25.12 | Interrupting the Violence
- 07.24.12 | Scott Focuses on Preventing Youth Violence in Several Events this Week on Capitol Hill

- 06.08.12 | Scott Works to Strengthen Workforce Investment Bill for Long-term Unemployed and Disadvantaged Youth
- 04.02.12 | Scott Addresses National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention's Annual Summit
- 02.27.12 | Video: Briefing on the Youth PROMISE Act

- 10.29.09 | Crime Subcommittee Holds Important Hearing on Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System
- 06.12.09 | Youth PROMISE Act Picks Up 150th Co-sponsor in House
- 05.14.09 | Youth PROMISE Act Picks Up 100th Co-sponsor in House
- 05.04.09 | Youth PROMISE Act Picks Up Endorsements in Advance of Advocacy Events on Capitol Hill
- 02.19.09 | Rep. Scott Visits Los Angeles to Promote Youth PROMISE Act
- 02.18.09 | Rep. Scott and Rep. Castle Introduce Youth PROMISE Act
- 12.03.08 | Youth Violence Summit - Empowering Communities to Combat Gang Crime: The Youth PROMISE Act
- 04.04.08 | Audio of Rep. Bobby Scott's and Sen. Joe Biden's briefing on "Reducing Violent Crime - International Perspectives"
- 03.20.08 | Rep. Scott to Host Teen Summit on Youth Violence at IC Norcom High School
- Presentation of Dr. Dewey Cornell, Clinical Psychologist and Professor, Curry School of Education at the University of Virginind Director of the UVA Youth Violence Project
- Coverage by WAVY-TV10 (Hampton Roads) of the event

- 02.26.08 | Audio of Rep. Scott's Media Roundtable on the Youth PROMISE Act

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**Background Information**

- Overview of the Youth PROMISE Act
- Press Release

- Text of the Youth PROMISE Act
- List of Cosponsors
- Letter from Organizations Supporting the Youth PROMISE Act
- Charts on Incarceration (Handout)
- "Investing in Our Nation's Youth" - by Rep. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott - Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Spring 2008 Newsletter

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**Resolutions In Favor Juvenile Prevention and Intervention Practices**

- U.S. Conference of Mayors, 77th Annual Meeting, Support for the Youth PROMISE Act
- U.S. Conference of Mayors, 76th Annual Meeting, Support for Cradle to Prison Pipeline Initiative (Sponsored by the President of the Conference of Mayors, Mayor Doug Palmer of Trenton, NJ)
- U.S. Conference of Mayors, 76th Annual Meeting, Comprehensive Gang Abatement Legislation (Sponsored by Mayor Sheila Dixon of Baltimore, MD)
- National Association of Counties

**TOP** **Resolutions and Letters from Cities & States In Support of the Youth PROMISE Act**

- City of Los Angeles, CA
- City of San Francisco, CA
- Juvenile Probation Commission, City of San Fancisco, CA
- City of East Cleveland, OH
- City of Philadelphia, PA
- City of Pittsburgh, PA
- Santa Fe County, NM
- City of Norfolk, VA
- City of Hampton, VA
- City of Newport News, VA
- City of Pasadena, CA
- City of Richmond, VA
- City of Portsmouth, VA

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**Reports**

- Annie E. Casey Foundation Report - No Place for Kids: The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration
- Childrens Defense Fund: America's Cradle to Prison Pipeline Report
- Potential for Change: Public Attitudes and Policy Preferences for Juvenile Justice Systems Reform Center for Children's Law and Policy
- Models for Change: Rehabilitation Versus Incarceration of Juvenile Offenders: Public Preferences in Four Models for Change States

- The Illinois Coalition for the Fair Sentencing of Children: Categorically Less Culpable - Children Sentenced to Life Without Possibility of Parole in Illinois
- Moving Toward A More Integrative Approach To Justice Reform - Open Society Institute
- The PEW Center on the States - One in 100: Behind Bars in America 2008
- Charles Hamilton Houston Institution for Race & Justice: No More Children Left Behind Bars
- And Justice for Some: Differential Treatment of Youth of Color in the Justice System - National Council on Crime and Delinquency
- The Economic Retrun on PCCD's Investment in Research-based Programs: A Cost-Benefit Assessment of Delingquency Prevention In Pennsylvania
- Penn State University Press Release

- American Psychological Association - Disseminating Evidence-Based Practice For Children and Adolescents
- The Impact of Substance Abuse on Federal, State and Local Budgets - National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University
- Fight Crime Invest in Kids:Safer Streets - Cutting repeat crimes by juvenile offenders

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## Press

- 12.31.09| Try new approach with young offenders - The Virginian-Pilot
- 12.29.09| With prevention, intervention, and enforcement, reduce crime and violence one neighborhood at a time - The Daily Press
- 06.24.09 | Anti-crime bill picks up cosponsors, momentus - The Hill
- 05.21.09 | Is Suppression Enough? Congress takes a fresh approach to the gang issue - the truth - Loudoun Independent
- 09.12.08 | Turning Point in the Gang Crisis - The Nation
- 07.25.08 | Chicago: Murder rate sparks political spats - The Washington Times
- 07.16.08 | Youth Empowered to Find their Voice, Push for Better Future - The Christian Post
- 07.13.08 | Hard to tell real gangs from mere wannabes - The San Diego Union-Tribune
- 07.11.08 | In the inner city, a summer job can be a lifesaver - The Providence Journal (Providence, RI)
- 04.23.08 | Inmate Count in U.S. Dwarfs Other Nations' - The New York Times
- 03.28.08 | Congressman Bobby Scott Hosts "Teen Summit On Violence" In An Effort to Promote The Youth PROMISE Act - EdNews.org
- 03.25.08 | Congressman Bobby Scott hosts teen crime and violence summit - WAVY-TV10 - Hampton Roads
- 03.20.08 | Small Businesses Offer Alternatives to Gang Life - The New York Times
- 03.10.08 | Police Chief: District's anti-gang laws ineffective - DC Examiner
- 12.21.07 | Building Boom - Daily Press (Newport News, VA)
- 12.07.07 | Experts on youth violence: Intervene early or pay dearly later - CNN.com
- 11.20.07 | The Gang Bill - EbonyJet Article
- 09.22.07 | Gang Crimes Have Fallen in Fairfax - The Washington Post

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## Editorials

- 05.24.09 | The Wrong Way to Fight Gang Crime - The Washington Post
- 05.05.09 | Baron Davis: Breaking the Cycle of Inner-City Gang Violence - The Huffington Post
- 03.01.09 | Obamnd the Black Agenda - Ebony Magazine
- 12.30.08 | A Job or a Gang? - The New York Times
- 07.29.08 | Fight the Roots - Toronto Star Editorial
- 07.24.08 | Don't need cape to be a crusader - The Seattle Times
- 05.04.08 | Blocking the Transmission of Violence - The New York Times

- 04.15.08 | Two Separate Societies: One in Prison, One Not - The Washington Post
- 03.20.08 | Cutting the Prison Rate Safely - The Washington Post
- 03.10.08 | Prison Nation - New York Times Editoria l
- 03.03.08 | Cold-blooded Costs - New Orleans City Business
- 02.29.08 | Prisons vs. Colleges - Inside Higher Ed
- 01.31.08 | Breaking the School-to-Prison Pipeline - AlterNet
- 11.28.07 | Prevent, or build - Roanoke Times Editorial (Roanoke, VA)
- 11.27.07 | Gangbuster - Daily Press Editorial (Newport News, VA)
- 11.15.07 | Congress must target roots of gangs - Pasadena Star News (Pasadena, CA)
- 10.30.07 | Rep. Scott's blueprint can save young people - Virginian-Pilot Editorial (Norfolk, VA)
- 10.15.07 | Think Prevention First - Baltimore Sun Editorial (Baltimore, MD)
- 07.19.07 | The Wrong Approach to Gangs - New York Times Editorial

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**Letters of Endorsement**

- Letter from Organizations Supporting the Youth PROMISE Act
- Campaign for Youth Justice
- Fight Crime: Invest in Kids
- National Juvenile Justice Network
- Children's Defense Fund
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- Coalition for Juvenile Justice
- The Sentencing Project
- Voices for America's Children
- American Psychological Association
- American Bar Association
- National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
- African American Ministers in Action
- Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race & Justic e
- Ohio Supports the Youth PROMISE Act
- California Supports the Youth PROMISE Act
- National Council of La Raza
- Michigan After-School Partnership
- Penal Reform International
- Justice Policy Institute
- Child Welfare League of America
- pre[k]now

- National PTA
- Maryland Department of Juvenile Services
- Democrats for Education Reform
- American Civil Liberties Union
- The Southeastern Tidewater Opportunity Project (STOP)
- California Public Defenders Association
- Richmond Peace Education Center
- Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice
- Virginia Governor Timothy M. Kaine
- Peace in the Hood
- National Council for Urban (Formations) Peace, Justice and Empowerment
- First Focus: Campaign for Children
- Joint Letter of Support to President Obama from over 100 prominent public leaders, entertainers and civil rights icons
- Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy

**Briefing Materials**

- Key Points of the Youth PROMISE Act from The Cochrane Collaboration College for Policy at George Mason Univeristy
- The Cochrane Collaboration College for Policy at George Mason Univeristy Overview
- Cochrane Collaboration College for Policy at George Mason Univeristy Youth Violence and Intervention Strategies Presentation

- Cochrane Collaboration College for Policy at George Mason Univeristy One Pager on the Cost of Adolescent Firearm Injuries

- Cochrane Collaboration College for Policy at George Mason Univeristy Implications of the Youth PROMISE Act
- **July 24, 2012 Violence Prevention Briefing Materials**
- Dr. Peter Scharf : Murder And Policy Drift, an Analysis of New Orleans Crime Policy
- Dr. Robert Zagar: Reduce Violence, Save Money, Save Lives

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