

**CALL TO ACTION:
FAITH COMMUNITIES ADVOCATE
FOR
JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM**

**WEEK OF ACTION:
SUNDAY, MAY 16 – SUNDAY, MAY 23, 2010**

**ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES FOR YOUR
FAITH COMMUNITY**

Dear People of Faith,

Did you know that 200,000 youths under age 18 have their cases processed in adult criminal courts? Did you know those prosecuted as adults are disproportionately youth of color? Did you know that youths are 36 times more likely to commit suicide in an adult jail than in a juvenile detention facility? As people of faith, our calling to work together and coordinate our efforts to gain juvenile justice reform is even more significant given the current brokenness of the juvenile justice system. We need to give our youth a chance to experience restoration even as public safety is maintained.

In this packet you will find important resources for helping faith communities advocate effectively for juvenile justice reform.

At this crucial time where legislation has a chance of passing we need to work together faithfully and strategically in prayer as well as in advocacy.

Let us take a hold of this opportunity to bring hope, reconciliation and a more just system for our youth.

In peace and hope,

Bill Mefford
Director of Human and Civil Rights
General Board of Church and Society
The United Methodist Church

Corryne Deliberto
Domestic Policy Advisor
Advocacy and Government Relations, World Vision

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Resources for Highlighting Juvenile Justice in your Celebration of Faith

Justice for our Youth

As many as 200,000 youth under the age of 18 have their cases processed in adult criminal court each year and, on any given day, nearly 10,000 of these youth are in adult jails and prisons.

Unfortunately, youth prosecuted as adults are:

- More likely to commit future crimes than youth who are retained in the juvenile justice system;
- Disproportionately youth of color;
- The highest risk group to experience physical and sexual assaults in adult jails; and
- Have the highest suicide rates of all inmates in jails – youth are 36 times more likely to commit suicide in an adult jail than in a juvenile detention facility.

For more information, visit: www.campaignforyouthjustice.org

The United States has more than 2,500 juvenile offenders in prison serving life without parole, with none in the rest of the world. Detailed research reveals:

- Documented evidence of systemic racial disparities,
- Gross failures in legal representation,
- Examples of youth being sentenced more harshly than adults convicted of the same crimes,
- A large number of the youth serving life without parole are not repeat offenders, nor have they been convicted of the most serious violent crimes,
- Nearly 60% of people serving JLWOP are first time offenders,

The Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth is dedicated to seeking a just alternative to JLWOP that will hold juveniles accountable for their crimes while offering the opportunity to achieve parole before they die. For more information, visit: www.fairsentencingofyouth.org

Opportunities for Action

People of all faiths understand the importance of childhood and the restoration of those who have committed crimes against others. Harsh, retributive punishment for youth has not proven to bring about public safety, healing for the victim, or redemption for the youth involved.

This week we have opportunities to support necessary reforms to the juvenile justice system, which will provide for accountability for youth who have committed crime, maintain public safety, and give our youth a chance to experience restoration.

Participate in some or all of this week's activities, which include:

- Highlight juvenile justice reform issues during the celebrations of faith taking place in your church.
- *Congressional Call-in Day* to your elected leaders asking them to support reforms that will promote youth accountability, maintain public safety, and protect and restore our youth who are within the criminal justice system.
- *Letter Writing Campaign* to your elected leaders to support needed reforms to the juvenile justice system.

COMMUNITIES OF FAITH ADVOCATE FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM

Justice for Youths

- **200,000 youths under age 18** have their cases processed in adult criminal courts
- **The U.S. is the only country** with 2,500 juvenile offenders serving life without parole (termed JLWOP).
- **Nearly 60%** of youths serving JLWOP are first-time offenders.
- Youths prosecuted as adults
- **disproportionately affects people of color.**
- **Youths are 36 times more likely to commit suicide** in an adult jail than in a juvenile detention facility.

For more information visit www.campaignforyouthjustice.org.

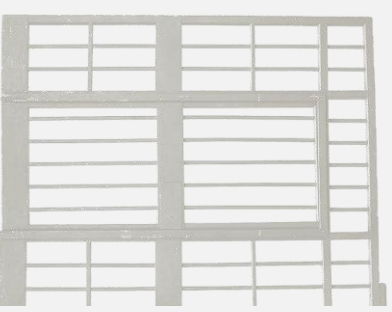


COMMUNITIES OF FAITH ADVOCATE FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM

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For more information visit www.campaignforyouthjustice.org.



WEEK OF ACTION STARTING MAY 16, 2010

The Blessing of Children

Monday Call-in Day (May 17) to your elected leaders. Ask them to support reforms to promote accountability, maintain public safety, and protect and restore our youths.

Letter Writing Campaign to Representative George Miller, chair of the House Education and Labor Committee.

People of faith need to call for juvenile justice reform to provide:

- **Accountability for youths** who have committed crime,
- **Maintain public safety**, and
- **Give our youths a chance** to experience restoration.

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PRAYER and DEVOTIONAL RESOURCES

During your weekly service, consider spending time in prayer for juveniles in detention centers. Below are a few prayers for children.

258: Parent/child dedication

Where these tiny toes will go
no one knows
but God
who meets our feet
in wind
and water
in sound
and silence—
the Rock on which we walk.

260: A Prayer for all Children

O Jesus, who gathered children in your lap:
Today we pray
for the children of our church,
the children of our city,
the children of our world.

May they live
without fear of guns and bombs,
without hunger for food or hunger for love,
without the shadow of violence.

May each day bring them
enough hugs for a smile,
enough friends for security,
enough adults for guidance,
enough love for faith to grow.

Empower us to work with you
to shape a world of justice
for all your children. Amen.

Taken from:

Brenneman, Diane Zaerr, Words for Worship 2, Herald Press: Scottdale, PA 2009.

A Prayer for Children

We pray for children who sneak popsicles before supper,
who erase holes in math workbooks,
who throw tantrums in the grocery store and pick at their food,
who like ghost stories, who can never find their shoes.

And we pray for those who stare at photographers from behind barbed wire,
who can't bound down the street in a new pair of sneakers,
who are born in places we wouldn't be caught dead in,
who never go to the circus, who live in an X-rated world.

We pray for children who sleep with the dog and bury the goldfish,
who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions,
who get visits from the tooth fairy,
who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money.

And we pray for those who never get dessert,
who have no safe blanket to drag behind them
who watch their parents watch them die,
who can't find any bread to steal,
who don't have any rooms to clean up,
whose monsters are real.

We pray for children who spend all their allowance before Tuesday,
who shove dirty clothes under the bed, and never rinse out the tub,
who don't like to be kissed in front of the carpool,
who squirm in church or temple and scream in the phone,
whose tears we sometimes laugh at and whose smiles can make us cry.

And we pray for those whose nightmares come in the daytime,
who will eat anything,
who have never seen a dentist,
who aren't spoiled by anybody,
who go to bed hungry and cry themselves to sleep,
who live and move, but have no being.

We pray for children who want to be carried... and for those who must,
for those we never give up on...and for those who don't get a second chance,
for those we smother...and for those who will grab the hand of anybody kind enough to offer it.

Taken from: A teacher in Faith Communities for Families and Children,
http://www.fcfla.org/index.php?option=com_prayercenter&task=view

HOW TO FIND INFORMATION ON YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Here are some tips on how to find contact information for the members of Congress that represent your state.

Finding Contact Information for your Senators

Website of the United States Senate: www.senate.gov

In the upper right-hand corner of the home page, you can search for your senators' website and contact information by identifying your state on the first row, "Find Your Senators". Note that your Senators will have district offices and a Washington DC office.

Finding Contact Information for your House Representative(s)

Website of the United States House of Representatives: www.house.gov

In the upper left-hand corner of the home page, you can search for your House representative's website and contact information by entering your zip code in the space marked, "Find Your Representative". Please note that you will need to enter your full zip code – the first five digits plus the last four. If you are not sure of the last four digits of your zip code, you can refer to the following link of the U.S. Postal Service website to look it up: <http://zip4.usps.com/zip4/welcome.jsp>. Note that your representative(s) will have a district office and a Washington DC office.

CONGRESSIONAL CALL-IN DAY

Organize a call-in day during which members of your faith community will call the offices of your Congressional representatives to request their support of the Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Reauthorization Act (S. 678) and the Youth PROMISE Act (H.R. 1064/S. 435), two juvenile justice reform bills that are currently before Congress. Now that Congress has passed health care reform legislation, urge your Senators and House Representatives to turn their attention to other issues affecting the well-being of children, such as juvenile justice reform and youth violence prevention.

It is recommended that you call the district offices of your Congressional representatives (as opposed to the Washington DC offices) to help establish a relationship between your community of faith and your representative's local team. You may want to go over the call script once together first and debrief after all of your calls.

Organizing the Congressional Call-In Day

1. Find your representatives by visiting www.house.gov and entering your full zip code (full zip can be found at: <http://zip4.usps.com/zip4/welcome.jsp>.) on the upper left side marked "Find Your Representative". Find your Senators by visiting www.senate.gov and searching your state.
2. Call the Capitol Hill Switchboard at (202)224-3121 and ask for your senators' and/or representative's office.
3. Use the call script (provided below) and add your own personal thoughts on the importance of supporting the JJDPA Reauthorization and the Youth PROMISE Act.
4. Re: the JJDPA, if your Senators are sponsors of the bill call to thank them for their support. A JJDPA bill has not been introduced in the House, so your call will focus on encouraging your Representative to support or take the lead on House efforts to introduce a House version of the bill. [See p. 15-16 the JJDPA Fact Sheet in this packet for a list of cosponsors of the JJDPA, S. 678.] Find out if your Senators or Representatives are sponsors of Youth PROMISE Act as well [see p. 17-22 for list of cosponsors]
5. It is important for members of Congress to hear from their constituents! Remember - they work for you! You are not expected to be an expert on the issue. Emphasize how these bills will affect your community. Share a personal story.

Phone Script & Talking Points – Calls to Senators

On Monday May 17th call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202)224-3121 and ask for your senators' and/or representative's office.

Hello! My name is _____ and I am calling your office to request that Sen. _____ support two important bills before the Senate that promote juvenile justice reform: the reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Act (S. 678) and the passage of the Youth PROMISE Act (S.435).

[NOTE: If your Senator is a sponsor of S. 678 or S. 435, be sure to thank him/her for their support.]

If they have questions here are some supportive statements:

- For the past 35 years, the JJDPa has been providing protections for youth in the juvenile justice system. However, the bill is now three years overdue for reauthorization and needs to be updated to reflect research on what works in the juvenile justice system and to provide more protections for youth. [The JJDPa is important to me because _____.]
- The Youth PROMISE Act tackles the problem of youth violence by creating stronger, safer communities through violence prevention strategies.
- The bill will enable local communities to form PROMISE councils to design sustainable, evidence-based programs that engage the whole community, including youth themselves, in reducing violence. Programs that focus only on law enforcement strategies and punitive measures don't work and can in fact, increase violence in a community.
- The Youth PROMISE Act calls for a balanced approach that combines prevention, intervention, and law enforcement strategies to reduce violence and create safer communities. [The Youth PROMISE Act is important to me because _____.]

Phone Script & Talking Points – Calls to House Representatives

Hello! My name is _____ and I am calling your office to request that Representative _____ take action in the House of Representatives to move on two important bills that promote juvenile justice reform: the reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Act and the Youth PROMISE Act (H.R. 1064).

[NOTE: If your Representative is a sponsor of H.R. 1064, be sure to thank him/her for their support.]

If they have questions here are some supportive statements:

- For the past 35 years, the JJDPA has been providing protections for youth in the juvenile justice system. However, the bill is now three years overdue for reauthorization and needs to be updated to reflect research on what works in the juvenile justice system and to provide more protections for youth. We ask that Representative _____ encourage the House Education & Labor Committee to introduce a JJDPA reauthorization bill as soon as possible. [The JJDPA is important to me because _____.]
- The Youth PROMISE Act (H.R. 1064) tackles the problem of youth violence by creating stronger, safer communities through violence prevention strategies.
- The bill will enable local communities to form PROMISE councils to design sustainable, evidence-based programs that engage the whole community, including youth themselves, in reducing violence. Programs that focus only on law enforcement strategies and punitive measures don't work and can in fact, increase violence in a community.
- The Youth PROMISE Act calls for a balanced approach that combines prevention, intervention, and law enforcement strategies to reduce violence and create safer communities. [The Youth PROMISE Act is important to me because _____.] The House has over 230 cosponsors on H.R. 1064.

LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN

We recommend that communities of faith focus their letter-writing campaign on the JDDPA to encourage the Rep. George Miller (CA) and Rep. John Kline (MN), Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Education & Labor Committee to bring the bill to a vote in committee and move the bill to a full vote in the House.

Below are resources to help you implement a letter-writing campaign.

Finding Contact Information for your House Representative(s)

Website of the United States House of Representatives: www.house.gov

Contact Information for House Education & Labor Committee Leadership

The Honorable George Miller
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
DC Office phone: 202-225-2095
DC Office fax: 202-225-5609
E-mail address:

The Honorable John Kline
1210 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
DC Office Phone: 202-225-2271
DC Office Fax: 202-225-2595
E-mail address:

Organizing the Letter Writing Campaign

1. Decide how you would like to conduct the letter-writing campaign:

OPTION 1: Invite members of your faith community to fax, e-mail, or write letters to Rep. Miller and Rep. Kline at their leisure during the week of action. Set a specific time when the letters should be completed: e.g., Monday – Thursday of the week of action.

OPTION 2: Set a day for the letter-writing campaign. Invite members of your faith community to gather at your church or someone's home to hand-write or type the letters together. Gather the letters and fax or e-mail them as a group to Rep. Miller's DC Office and Rep. Kline's DC office.

2. Provide each person with contact information for Rep. Miller and Rep. Kline.

3. Provide each participant with a letter template (see below). Encourage them to add their personal thoughts on the importance of the legislation in the letter.

4. Re: the JDDPA, be sure to inform participants if your Senators are sponsors of the bill. In that case, they can thank them for their support in the letter.

5. Re: the Youth PROMISE Act, be sure to inform participants if your Senators or House Representatives are sponsors of the bill. In that case, they can thank them for their support in the letter.
6. Remind participants that it is important for members of Congress to hear from their constituents. Remember - they work for you! It is your right as a U.S. citizen to share your thoughts and influence the decisions made in Congress. You are not expected to be an expert on the issue. The most important point you can emphasize to your representatives is how these bills will affect your community.
7. After the letter-writing campaign, circle back with participants to tally the number of letters written and sent and evaluate their experience.

Letter Template

The following template is meant to ensure that participants include the most salient points in their letters. Use it as a guide, but encourage participants to personalize their letters. They should feel free to include their thoughts on how the legislation will affect the community through a personal story or reflection. Congressional staff who read the letters will then be able to convey to Rep. Miller and Rep. Kline how the JJDPA will directly impact the community.

DATE

Dear Rep. Miller/Rep. Kline:

On behalf of young people in [STATE] and [DISTRICT-CITY-TOWN], I am writing to you to ask that you pass a reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act this year.

For the past 35 years, the JJDPA has been providing protections for youth in the juvenile justice system. However, the bill is now three years overdue for reauthorization and needs to be updated to reflect research on what works in the juvenile justice system and to provide more protections for youth. Senate bill S. 678 has been introduced in the Senate. I am pleased to see that hearings have been held on the JJDPA in the House. But, it is critical that a House version of the bill be drafted and passed.

The JJDPA is important to my community because

I believe that we must stop putting youth in adult jails and prisons, to end the over-incarceration of youth of color in the justice system, and instead devote more resources to effective juvenile justice programs such as alternatives to detention and incarceration. Please pass the JJDPA this year!

Sincerely,

FACT SHEET:

Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Reauthorization Act (s. 678)

What is the Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A)?

Established in 1974 and most recently authorized in 2002 with bipartisan support, the JJDP A is based on a broad consensus that children, youth and families involved with the juvenile and criminal courts should be guarded by federal standards for care and custody, while also upholding the interests of community safety and the prevention of victimization.

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A) provides for:

- A nationwide juvenile justice planning and advisory system spanning all states, territories and the District of Columbia;
- Federal funding for delinquency prevention and improvements in state and local juvenile justice programs and practices; and
- Operation of a federal agency (the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention) dedicated to training, technical assistance, model programs, and research and evaluation, to support state and local efforts.

Status of the JJDP A reauthorization in the Senate: S. 678, the Senate version of the JJDP A reauthorization, was introduced in the Senate Judiciary Committee in December 2009. The bill passed in committee and now must be placed on the agenda of the full Senate for a vote.

Current Senate sponsors of S. 678 (as of April 20, 2010):

Sen. Patrick Leahy (VT) – original sponsor
Sen. Roland Burris (IL)
Sen. Susan Collins (ME)
Sen. Al Franken (MN)
Sen. John Kerry (MA)
Sen. Mary Landrieu (LA)
Sen. Olympia Snowe (ME)

Sen. Ben Cardin (MD)
Sen. Richard Durbin (IL)
Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (NY)
Sen. Herb Kohl (WI)
Sen. Jeff Merkley (OR)
Sen. Arlen Specter (PA)

Status of the JJDP A in the House of Representatives: As of April 19, 2010, a House version of a bill reauthorizing JJDP A has not been introduced.

http://www.act4jj.org/media/factsheets/factsheet_11.pdf

CORE REQUIREMENTS IN S. 678

Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders (DSO)

Status offenses are offenses that only apply to minors whose actions would not be considered offenses at the age of majority, such as skipping school, running away, breaking curfew and possession or use of alcohol. Under the JJDP, status offenders may not be held in secure detention or confinement. There are, however, several exceptions to this rule, including allowing some status offenders to be detained for up to 24 hours. The DSO provision seeks to ensure that status offenders who have not committed a criminal offense are not held in secure juvenile facilities for extended periods of time or in secure adult facilities for any length of time. These children, instead, should receive community-based services, such as day treatment or residential home treatment, counseling, mentoring, family support and alternative education.

Adult Jail and Lock-up Removal

Under the JJDP, youth may not be detained in adult jails and lock-ups except for limited times before or after a court hearing (6 hours), in rural areas (24 hours plus weekends and holidays), or in unsafe travel conditions. This provision does not apply to children who are tried or convicted in adult criminal court. This provision is designed to protect children from psychological abuse, physical assault and isolation. Children housed in adult jails and lock-ups have been found to be eight times more likely to commit suicide, two times more likely to be assaulted by staff, and 50 percent more likely to be attacked with a weapon than children housed in juvenile facilities.

"Sight and Sound" Separation

When children are placed in an adult jail or lock-up, as in exceptions listed above, "sight and sound" contact with adults is prohibited under the JJDP. This provision seeks to prevent children from threats, intimidation or other forms of psychological abuse and physical assault. Under "sight and sound," children cannot be housed next to adult cells, share dining halls, recreation areas or any other common spaces with adults, or be placed in any circumstance that could expose them to threats or abuse from adult offenders.

Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)

Under the JJDP, states are required to assess and address the disproportionate contact of youth of color at key contact points in the juvenile justice system – from arrest to detention to confinement. Studies indicate that youth of color receive tougher sentences and are more likely to be incarcerated than white youth for the same offenses. With youth of color comprising one-third of the youth population but two-thirds of youth in contact with the juvenile justice system, this provision requires states and local jurisdictions to address the reasons for such disproportionate minority contact.

FACT SHEET: Youth PROMISE Act (H.R. 1064/S. 435)

Full bill title: Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education (PROMISE) Act

Current bill status in Congress: The Youth PROMISE Act has been introduced in both the House of Representatives (H.R. 1064) and the Senate (S. 435). In early December 2009, the bill passed the House Judiciary Committee. The next step in the House is to hold a vote on the bill in the House Education & Labor Committee. Although the bill has been introduced in the Senate Judiciary Committee, it has not yet been debated and voted on in committee.

Sponsors of the Youth PROMISE Act:

House of Representatives, H.R. 1064 - Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA) and Rep. Mike Castle (R-DE) are the original sponsors of the bill. In addition, there are 233 cosponsors in the House.

Rep. Last Name, First Name [State-District #]

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Rep Abercrombie, Neil [HI-1] | Rep Ackerman, Gary L. [NY-5] |
| Rep Altmire, Jason [PA-4] | Rep Andrews, Robert E. [NJ-1] |
| Rep Arcuri, Michael A. [NY-24] | Rep Baca, Joe [CA-43] |
| Rep Baldwin, Tammy [WI-2] | Rep Berkley, Shelley [NV-1] |
| Rep Berman, Howard L. [CA-28] | Rep Berry, Marion [AR-1] |
| Rep Bilbray, Brian P. [CA-50] | Rep Bishop, Sanford D., Jr. [GA-2] |
| Rep Bishop, Timothy H. [NY-1] | Rep Blumenauer, Earl [OR-3] |
| Rep Boccieri, John A. [OH-16] | Rep Bordallo, Madeleine Z. [GU] |
| Rep Boswell, Leonard L. [IA-3] | Rep Boucher, Rick [VA-9] |
| Rep Brady, Robert A. [PA-1] | Rep Braley, Bruce L. [IA-1] |
| Rep Brown, Corrine [FL-3] | Rep Butterfield, G. K. [NC-1] |
| Rep Cao, Anh "Joseph" [LA-2] | Rep Capps, Lois [CA-23] |
| Rep Capuano, Michael E. [MA-8] | Rep Cardoza, Dennis A. [CA-18] |
| Rep Carney, Christopher P. [PA-10] | Rep Carson, Andre [IN-7] |
| Rep Castle, Michael N. [DE] | Rep Chandler, Ben [KY-6] |
| Rep Christensen, Donna M. [VI] | Rep Chu, Judy [CA-32] |
| Rep Clarke, Yvette D. [NY-11] | Rep Clay, Wm. Lacy [MO-1] |
| Rep Cleaver, Emanuel [MO-5] | Rep Clyburn, James E. [SC-6] |
| Rep Cohen, Steve [TN-9] | Rep Connolly, Gerald E. "Gerry" [VA-11] |
| Rep Conyers, John, Jr. [MI-14] | Rep Cooper, Jim [TN-5] |
| Rep Courtney, Joe [CT-2] | Rep Crowley, Joseph [NY-7] |
| Rep Cuellar, Henry [TX-28] | Rep Cummings, Elijah E. [MD-7] |

Rep Dahlkemper, Kathleen A. [PA-3]
 Rep Davis, Danny K. [IL-7]
 Rep Davis, Susan A. [CA-53]
 Rep DeGette, Diana [CO-1]
 Rep DeLauro, Rosa L. [CT-3]
 Rep Doggett, Lloyd [TX-25]
 Rep Driehaus, Steve [OH-1]
 Rep Edwards, Donna F. [MD-4]
 Rep Ellison, Keith [MN-5]
 Rep Emerson, Jo Ann [MO-8]
 Rep Eshoo, Anna G. [CA-14]
 Rep Fattah, Chaka [PA-2]
 Rep Forbes, J. Randy [VA-4]
 Rep Fudge, Marcia L. [OH-11]
 Rep Gordon, Bart [TN-6]
 Rep Green, Al [TX-9]
 Rep Grijalva, Raul M. [AZ-7]
 Rep Hall, John J. [NY-19]
 Rep Hastings, Alcee L. [FL-23]
 Rep Herseth Sandlin, Stephanie [SD]
 Rep Hill, Baron P. [IN-9]
 Rep Hinojosa, Ruben [TX-15]
 Rep Hodes, Paul W. [NH-2]
 Rep Holt, Rush D. [NJ-12]
 Rep Israel, Steve [NY-2]
 Rep Jackson-Lee, Sheila [TX-18]
 Rep Johnson, Henry C. "Hank," Jr. [GA-4]
 Rep Kagen, Steve [WI-8]
 Rep Kaptur, Marcy [OH-9]
 Rep Kildee, Dale E. [MI-5]
 Rep Kilroy, Mary Jo [OH-15]
 Rep Kingston, Jack [GA-1]
 Rep Klein, Ron [FL-22]
 Rep Kucinich, Dennis J. [OH-10]
 Rep Larsen, Rick [WA-2]
 Rep LaTourette, Steven C. [OH-14]
 Rep Levin, Sander M. [MI-12]
 Rep Lipinski, Daniel [IL-3]
 Rep Davis, Artur [AL-7]
 Rep Davis, Lincoln [TN-4]
 Rep DeFazio, Peter A. [OR-4]
 Rep Delahunt, William D. [MA-10]
 Rep Dicks, Norman D. [WA-6]
 Rep Doyle, Michael F. [PA-14]
 Rep Edwards, Chet [TX-17]
 Rep Ehlers, Vernon J. [MI-3]
 Rep Ellsworth, Brad [IN-8]
 Rep Engel, Eliot L. [NY-17]
 Rep Faleomavaega, Eni F.H. [AS]
 Rep Filner, Bob [CA-51]
 Rep Frank, Barney [MA-4]
 Rep Gonzalez, Charles A. [TX-20]
 Rep Grayson, Alan [FL-8]
 Rep Griffith, Parker [AL-5]
 Rep Gutierrez, Luis V. [IL-4]
 Rep Hare, Phil [IL-17]
 Rep Heinrich, Martin [NM-1]
 Rep Higgins, Brian [NY-27]
 Rep Hinchey, Maurice D. [NY-22]
 Rep Hirono, Mazie K. [HI-2]
 Rep Holden, Tim [PA-17]
 Rep Honda, Michael M. [CA-15]
 Rep Jackson, Jesse L., Jr. [IL-2]
 Rep Johnson, Eddie Bernice [TX-30]
 Rep Jones, Walter B., Jr. [NC-3]
 Rep Kanjorski, Paul E. [PA-11]
 Rep Kennedy, Patrick J. [RI-1]
 Rep Kilpatrick, Carolyn C. [MI-13]
 Rep King, Peter T. [NY-3]
 Rep Kissell, Larry [NC-8]
 Rep Kosmas, Suzanne M. [FL-24]
 Rep Langevin, James R. [RI-2]
 Rep Larson, John B. [CT-1]
 Rep Lee, Barbara [CA-9]
 Rep Lewis, John [GA-5]
 Rep Loeb sack, David [IA-2]

Rep Lofgren, Zoe [CA-16]
Rep Lujan, Ben Ray [NM-3]
Rep Maffei, Daniel B. [NY-25]
Rep Markey, Betsy [CO-4]
Rep Massa, Eric J. J. [NY-29]
Rep McCarthy, Carolyn [NY-4]
Rep McDermott, Jim [WA-7]
Rep McIntyre, Mike [NC-7]
Rep McNerney, Jerry [CA-11]
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Rep Mitchell, Harry E. [AZ-5]
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Rep Murtha, John P. [PA-12]
Rep Nadler, Jerrold [NY-8]
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Rep Pallone, Frank, Jr. [NJ-6]
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Rep Pingree, Chellie [ME-1]
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Rep Richardson, Laura [CA-37]
Rep Ross, Mike [AR-4]
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Rep Murphy, Tim [PA-18]
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Rep Norton, Eleanor Holmes [DC]
Rep Oberstar, James L. [MN-8]
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Rep Perriello, Thomas S.P. [VA-5]
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Rep Ruppertsberger, C. A. Dutch [MD-2]
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Rep Schwartz, Allyson Y. [PA-13]
Rep Serrano, Jose E. [NY-16]
Rep Shea-Porter, Carol [NH-1]

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| Rep Snyder, Vic [AR-2] | Rep Souder, Mark E. [IN-3] |
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| Rep Thompson, Bennie G. [MS-2] | Rep Thompson, Mike [CA-1] |
| Rep Tierney, John F. [MA-6] | Rep Titus, Dina [NV-3] |
| Rep Tonko, Paul D. [NY-21] | Rep Towns, Edolphus [NY-10] |
| Rep Tsongas, Niki [MA-5] | Rep Upton, Fred [MI-6] |
| Rep Van Hollen, Chris [MD-8] | Rep Velazquez, Nydia M. [NY-12] |
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| Rep Wasserman Schultz, Debbie [FL-20] | Rep Waters, Maxine [CA-35] |
| Rep Watson, Diane E. [CA-33] | Rep Watt, Melvin L. [NC-12] |
| Rep Waxman, Henry A. [CA-30] | Rep Weiner, Anthony D. [NY-9] |
| Rep Welch, Peter [VT] | Rep Wexler, Robert [FL-19] |
| Rep Wilson, Charles A. [OH-6] | Rep Wittman, Robert J. [VA-1] |
| Rep Wolf, Frank R. [VA-10] | Rep Woolsey, Lynn C. [CA-6] |
| Rep Wu, David [OR-1] | Rep Yarmuth, John A. [KY-3] |

Senate, S. 435 – Sen. Bob Casey (D-PA) and Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME) are the original sponsors of the bill. Other Senate sponsors include:

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|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Sen. Mark Begich (AK) | Sen. Jim Webb (VA) |
| Sen. Ben Cardin (MD) | Sen. Roland Burris (IL) |
| Sen. Edward Kaufman (DE) | Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (NY) |
| Sen. Bernard Sanders (VT) | Sen. Debbie Stabenow (MI) |
| Sen. Arlen Specter (PA) | Sen. Sherrod Brown (OH) |
| Sen. Mark Warner (VA) | |

Overview: Under the Youth PROMISE Act, communities facing the greatest juvenile crime and youth gang challenges will form a local council. This council will include representatives of community-based organizations, law enforcement, social service organizations, health and mental health providers, schools, and court services. The council will develop a comprehensive plan to implement evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies. These strategies will be targeted toward young people who are at risk of becoming involved, or are already involved in, gangs or the juvenile justice system to redirect them toward productive and law-abiding alternatives. Major program components of the bill include:

1. **PROMISE Advisory Panel:** This panel will help the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention select community grantees that will receive funding for youth violence prevention and intervention programs. The panel will also develop standards for the evaluation of prevention and intervention approaches carried out under the Youth PROMISE Act. Data will be gathered in communities to determine existing needs and resources for prevention and intervention. The data will be used to determine levels of funding provided under the act to ensure that adequate support is allocated to the parts of the country needing the most assistance.
2. **PROMISE Coordinating Councils and Grant Funding:** PROMISE Coordinating Councils will be established in select communities to conduct an assessment of juvenile crime and street gang activity and determine local resource needs and assets. Based on the assessments, the PROMISE Coordinating Councils will develop plans that include a broad array of prevention and intervention programs, account for the community's cultural and linguistic needs, and utilize approaches that are proven to be effective in reducing involvement in delinquent conduct or gang activity.
3. **National Center for Proven Practices Research:** The Center will collect and disseminate information to the PROMISE Coordinating Councils and the public on current research about evidence-based best practices in youth violence prevention and intervention.
4. **Youth Oriented Policing (YOP):** The bill provides funding for hiring and training Youth Oriented Policing (YOP) officers that understand the most effective ways to work with youth, support evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies, and work closely with community members to promote safe neighborhoods.

Reasons to Support the Youth PROMISE Act:

1. **Strong focus on the use of evidence-based methods of prevention and intervention:** The Youth PROMISE Act builds upon the broad array of evidence-based strategies that are proven to reduce and prevent youth violence and delinquency. In addition, the bill requires that thorough assessment and evaluation measures be implemented to ensure that resources are directed toward communities faced with the highest levels of crime and gang activity.
2. **Inclusive PROMISE Coordinating Councils:** The most effective, sustainable way to address youth violence is to provide a balanced, integrated approach involving prevention, intervention, and suppression strategies that engage the whole community in partnership, primarily social service providers, faith-based organizations, schools, law enforcement agencies, and parents. The Youth PROMISE Act articulates this approach effectively by requiring that the PROMISE Coordinating Councils be comprised of all key community stakeholders. The bill also provides measures to support and enhance community collaboration around this issue. We applaud in particular, the requirement to involve youth themselves as full members of the coordinating councils.
3. **Focus on the impact of cost savings related to prevention and intervention:** The bill emphasizes the significant savings generated when investment is made in early childhood education, after-school programs, mentoring, and other prevention and intervention efforts, as opposed to costly incarceration and prosecution strategies. We affirm the re-investment of these savings back into the programs supported by this bill.

4. **Emphasis on youth-oriented policing:** Many communities around the nation have experienced first-hand the value of working with law enforcement officials that are knowledgeable in youth development trends, supportive of evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies, and who work closely with community members to keep our streets safe. The youth-oriented policing provisions outlined in this bill, particularly the emphasis on training, capacity-building, and community collaboration, shed light on the important role that law enforcement can play in the community-wide effort to prevent and reduce youth violence.

FACT SHEET: Issue of Juvenile Life without Parole in the United States

There are more than 2,500 people in the United States serving life in prison without the possibility of parole for crimes committed under the age of eighteen. In the spring of 2010, the United States Supreme Court is expected to rule on the constitutionality of imposing such sentences on a subset of these juvenile offenders who were convicted of non-homicide crimes. This constitutional challenge was brought before the court in two cases, *Sullivan v. Florida*¹ and *Graham v. Florida*,² for which arguments were heard in November 2009. As Chief Justice John Roberts acknowledged in those oral arguments, the Court has previously recognized that “juveniles are different.”³ Regardless of whether the Court extends that precedent to find the sentencing of youth to life in prison without the possibility of parole unconstitutional in one or both of these cases, advocates for youth have called for reform of extreme sentencing policies, on the basis that they grossly undermine rational, fair, and age-appropriate treatment of youth.

The practice of sentencing youth to life in prison without the possibility of parole is deeply flawed public policy. First, we address the long-recognized principle that youth are different from adults, reinforced in recent years by adolescent development brain science, as well as by examples of youth who were successfully rehabilitated. Second, we critique the frequently argued notion that harsh sentencing is necessary to protect public safety, a premise undermined by both the inconsistent and arbitrary application and by the resulting diversion of taxpayer dollars that could be used to increase public safety through prevention programs. Third, we discuss how the sentencing of youth to life in prison without the possibility of parole undermines America’s moral standing in the world, as the only nation in the world that imposes this irrevocable sentence on people under the age of eighteen.

We conclude the Issue Brief with a suggested alternative to the practice of sentencing youth to life in prison without the possibility of parole which balances the need to hold youth who commit serious crimes accountable, while still recognizing their inherent capacity for change. We recommend the creation of a system that would allow for meaningful periodic review of sentences given to youth convicted of serious offenses to determine whether they continue to pose a threat to society or may be able to return to our communities as productive citizens. This is a common sense solution to an irrational and grossly misguided policy.