

H.R. 3846: The Youth PROMISE Act
The Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring,
Intervention, Support, and Education Act
Introduced by The Honorable Robert C. “Bobby” Scott on October 16, 2007

Overview

The Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education Act (Youth PROMISE Act) implements the advice Rep. Scott received over the last year from more than fifty criminal justice policymakers, researchers, practitioners, analysts, and law enforcement officials from across the political spectrum concerning evidence- and research-based strategies to reduce gang violence and crime, particularly among youth.

Under the Youth PROMISE Act, communities facing the greatest youth gang and crime challenges will come together to develop a comprehensive plan for implementing evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies. These PROMISE Councils will include representatives from law enforcement, court services, schools, social service, health and mental health providers, and community-based organizations, including faith-based organizations, and the strategies articulated in the PROMISE Plan will be targeted at young people who are at-risk of becoming involved, or involved in, gangs or the criminal justice system to redirect them toward productive and law-abiding alternatives.

Since its introduction only two weeks ago, the Youth PROMISE Act has attracted more than 45 co-sponsors from urban and suburban communities across the nation:

Artur Davis (D-AL)
Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ)
George Miller (D-CA)
Loretta Sanchez (D-CA)
Grace Napolitano (D-CA)
Michael Honda (D-CA)
Bob Filner (D-CA)
Barbara Lee (D-CA)
Doris Matsui (D-CA)
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Al Green (D-TX)
Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)
Donna M. Christensen (D-VI)
Gwen Moore (D-WI)

* Denotes original co-sponsor

Section-by-Section

Title I: Sec. 101 creates a PROMISE Advisory Panel. This Panel will help the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention select PROMISE community grantees. The Panel will also develop standards for the evaluation of juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity prevention and intervention approaches carried out under the PROMISE Act. Sec. 102 provides for specific data collection in each designated geographic area to assess the needs and existing resources for juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity prevention and intervention. This data will then facilitate the strategic geographic allocation of resources provided under the Act to areas of greatest need for assistance.

Title II: Sec. 201 establishes grants to enable local and tribal communities, via PROMISE Coordinating Councils (PCCs) (Sec. 202), to conduct an objective assessment (Sec. 203) regarding juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity and resource needs and strengths in the community. Based upon the assessment, the PCCs then will develop plans (Sec. 204) that include a broad array of evidence-based prevention and intervention programs. These programs will be responsive to the needs and strengths of the community, account for the community's cultural and linguistic needs, and utilize approaches that have been shown to be effective in reducing involvement in or continuing involvement in delinquent conduct or criminal street gang activity. The PCCs can then apply for federal funds, on the basis of greatest need, to implement their PROMISE plans (Sec. 211, 212, 213). Title II also provides for national evaluation of PROMISE programs and activities (Sec. 222), based on performance standards developed by the PROMISE Advisory Panel.

Title III: Sec. 301 establishes a National Center for Proven Practices Research. This Center will collect and disseminate information to PCCs and the public on current research and other information about evidence-based and promising practices related to juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity prevention and intervention. Sec. 302 provides for regional research partners to assist PCCs in developing their assessments and plans.

Title IV: Sec. 402 provides for the hiring and training of Youth Oriented Policing (YOPS) officers to juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity. Sec. 403 also establishes a Center for Youth Oriented Policing, which will be responsible for identification, development and dissemination of information related to strategic policing practices and technologies to law enforcement agencies related to youth.

Title V: Sec. 501 provides additional improvements to current laws affecting juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity, including support for youth victim and witness protection programs. Sec. 502 provides extended and increased authorizations for the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant program to support juvenile justice systems.

Authorization: The bill makes a substantial and sustained investment in evidence-based prevention and intervention practices, authorizing just over \$2.9 billion per year. Research shows that such investments in youth will yield tremendous savings through reductions in violence, delinquency and crime, welfare, prison and other criminal justice costs.