



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

January 24, 2008

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 148,000 members and affiliates of the American Psychological Association (APA), I am writing to urge your support of H.R. 3846, the *Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education Act (Youth PROMISE Act)*. This legislation, introduced by Representative Bobby Scott, focuses on the prevention of violent behavior and gang involvement among at-risk youth in order to address the problem of neighborhood crime.

APA is the world's largest scientific organization representing psychology. Our mission is to advance psychology as a science, as a profession, and as a means of promoting health, education, and human welfare. APA members actively develop and encourage the implementation and dissemination of prevention and intervention programs that have demonstrated effectiveness for at-risk youth.

The *Youth PROMISE Act* would provide much-needed resources to communities with the greatest crime reduction needs so that they can employ evidence-based and promising practices that address risk-factors connected to juvenile delinquency, violence, and gang involvement. To meet the specific needs of individual communities, H.R. 3846 sets up coordinating councils of community stakeholders. These groups would be charged with assessing gaps in local prevention and intervention needs and developing plans to address them. In addition, the legislation allows for a wide range of activities, including educational, health, mental health, job training, and school-, community-, and faith-based programs.

The preventive approach of this important legislation has several aims, including: keeping young people from engaging in violence and criminal activity; protecting communities; reducing strains on the juvenile justice system; and providing more children and adolescents with opportunities to lead healthy lifestyles and to make meaningful contributions to society.

Once again, we urge your support of this vital legislation that would greatly benefit youth at risk of delinquency and gang involvement, as well as the communities where they live. Please contact Annie Toro at (202) 336-6068 or atoro@apa.org, if you would like any additional information on this critical legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "G. Keita".

Gwendolyn Puryear Keita, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Public Interest Directorate