



February 4, 2008

The Hon. Bobby Scott
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Dear Representative Scott:

We write on behalf of advocates for high-quality pre-kindergarten education to thank you for introducing H.R. 3846, the Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education Act. Your bill rightfully recognizes that the best way to reduce juvenile crime is to lay the foundations for children's long-term success in the early years of their education.

We applaud the Youth PROMISE Act for giving local communities additional resources to support pre-k programs and Head Start and Early Head Start agencies as a means of reducing juvenile delinquency. Longitudinal research conducted over 40 years demonstrates that participation in high-quality pre-k programs drastically reduces the likelihood that children will engage in criminal activity. The Youth PROMISE Act will help more children begin their education with this firm foundation.

As more children gain access to high-quality pre-k, the savings to the criminal justice system will begin to register within states and on a national level. One recent study found that crime savings accounted for 18 percent of the overall return on investment in high quality pre-k, second only to savings from increased earnings and tax revenues generated over the lifetimes of participating students. These effects reverberate throughout the national economy, where savings derived from reduced criminal behavior would amount to \$32.3 billion to governments and \$188 billion in overall benefits to the economy after 43 years of providing access to all children in each state, according to a recent Economic Policy Institute publication.

These benefits are not merely abstract economic projections, but are the results of improvements in the lives of children and their communities. They reflect the benefits of giving every child the resources to succeed in school and in life, regardless of his or her income or background.

As the bill moves forward, we urge you to consider amending the language in Sec. 204 (c) (1) to add "state pre-kindergarten programs," and to require that eligible community programs meet quality early childhood benchmarks. We would be happy to work with your staff on such language. Thank you again for your leadership in introducing the Youth PROMISE Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Libby Doggett".

Libby Doggett, Ph.D.
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Patterson".

Kathy Patterson
Federal Policy Director