



March 20, 2008

The Honorable Bobby Scott
United States House of Representatives
1201 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D. C., 20510

Dear Representative Scott:

On behalf of Voices for America's Children (*Voices*), and child advocates across the country, I would like to extend our endorsement of the Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education Act (Youth PROMISE Act, H.R. 3846). This legislation approaches juvenile violence through a prevention based perspective designed to strengthen communities and improve the lives of youth, and not through a vague lens of increased incarceration.

Voices is a national, nonpartisan child advocacy organization strengthening and integrating the work of our 60 multi-issue members in 46 states, as well as the District of Columbia and the United States Virgin Islands. *Voices'* member organizations advocate for effective public policies that will improve the lives of all children in their communities and states. *Voices* works on behalf of all children and families, with a specific focus on vulnerable populations. *Voices'* vision for safety calls for all children to be safe in their homes and communities from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence, avoid risky behaviors, and contribute to the community well-being. This vision requires a comprehensive approach, one that is equally focused on prevention and early intervention activities for children and families; high quality intervention based services when children are at risk; and a full community based aftercare approach when children reenter their community. *Voices* believes that your legislation is a strong step forward in achieving this goal.

The Youth PROMISE Act will provide the necessary supports allowing for the development and implementation of prevention and early intervention strategies that are based on the existing strengths of the community. *Voices* further commends your efforts for including additional support for the identification of research based best practices, establishing a "Youth-Oriented Policing" program, and reauthorizing the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Program. These are all areas that begin a new approach in ensuring that your youth and communities are safe and free from harm.

Voices looks forward to working with you to move this legislation to enactment.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William H. Bentley", written over a faint circular watermark or seal.

William H. Bentley
President and Chief Executive Officer