

Youth Mentoring Legislative Agenda 111th Congress



17.6 million young people want or need mentors to help them reach their full potential, and nearly 44 million adults say they are willing to become mentors. Due to capacity limitations, only 3 million youngsters are in formal mentoring relationships, leaving nearly 15 million young people still in need of mentors. The following priorities will help build the infrastructure necessary to expand high quality mentoring programs and help close the nation's "mentoring gap." A continued show of leadership from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), which included mentoring in its 2006-2010 Strategic Plan, would further bolster volunteer mentor recruitment efforts in our country and make a tremendous difference in the lives of millions of youth. Other related priorities:

- 1. Child Protection Improvements Act (S. 2756/H.R. 5606).** This legislation would create a streamlined system to allow youth-serving organizations access to nationwide FBI fingerprint searches in a timely and affordable manner. It is based on the PROTECT Act pilot, which has been tested for nearly five years by mentoring organizations and others. More than 40,000 background checks have been performed during the pilot, and 6.1% of volunteers had criminal records of concern—including very serious offenses like rape, murder, and child sexual abuse. And, 40% of those with negative results had criminal records from a state other than where they were applying to volunteer. Currently, youth-serving organizations are often unable to access criminal records outside of their state, which puts children at risk. Introduced in the 110th by Sens. Biden, Specter, and Hatch and Reps. Schiff and Mike Rogers (MI). We are asking Sen. Schumer to take the lead in the Senate and have secured commitments for ongoing support from the champions remaining in Congress.
- 2. Mentoring for All Act (S. 3200).** This legislation would create a competitive grant fund of \$50 million to strengthen and grow mentoring infrastructure across the country and provide additional support and funding to direct service mentoring organizations. This funding stream would be administered by CNCS and would lead to more children in mentoring relationships and stronger, higher-quality mentoring programs. Sens. Kerry and Specter plan to reintroduce in the next Congress, with Rep. Susan Davis set to introduce the House counterpart.
- 3. Mentoring America's Children Act (S. 1812/H.R. 2611).** This legislation would strengthen and reauthorize the US Department of Education's Mentoring Programs grants. These grants help local mentoring organizations start or expand school-based mentoring programs for children of greatest need living in rural areas, high-crime areas, or troubled-home environments, or who attend schools with violence problems. The legislation would improve the sustainability of grantees, ensure grantees have access to training and technical assistance, and increase research and evaluation. Reps. Susan Davis, Betty McCollum, and Rogers (MI) plan to reintroduce. Sen. Clinton sponsored in the 110th; we are asking Sen. Dodd to take the lead.
- 4. \$100 million for mentoring in FY2010 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations.** Two critical federal programs provide competitive grants to local mentoring programs to help them get established or grow. Currently funded at \$100 million annually, these two grant programs provide critical dollars to help ensure that more children have access to quality mentoring relationships. We ask that \$100 million be sustained for FY2010. Specifically:
 - \$50 million to the US Department of Education's Mentoring Programs grants, and
 - \$50 million for the Health and Human Services' Mentoring Children of Prisoners program

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