

## FY 2016 PROGRAMMATIC REQUEST: SUPPORT YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAMS

Dear Colleague:

We urge you to sign on to the letter below requesting robust support for **Youth Mentoring Programs** in the Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the FY16 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

For children and adolescents facing barriers to achievement and opportunity due to poverty, isolation, and other circumstances there is one proven, evidence-based intervention: A good mentor.

These funds support the implementation, delivery, and enhancement of mentoring services to improve outcomes for at-risk, high-risk, or underserved youth. Currently, there's just one source of federal funding for mentoring—the Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The absence of adequate mentoring funds for this program is a serious gap in our approach to education.

This is your opportunity to help our youth reach their full potential. We invite you to join us in sending the letter below. If you have any questions or would like to sign on, please contact Corey Solow at [corey.solow@mail.house.gov](mailto:corey.solow@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,

Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress

John Conyers, Jr.  
Member of Congress

March 25, 2015

The Honorable John Culberson  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies  
H-309, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chaka Fattah  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Culberson and Ranking Member Fattah:

As you begin your work on the Fiscal Year 2016 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we respectfully request robust funding for Part G Youth Mentoring Programs to support the implementation, delivery, and enhancement of mentoring services to improve outcomes for at-risk, high-risk, or underserved youth.

For children and adolescents facing barriers to achievement and opportunity due to poverty, isolation, and other circumstances there is one proven, evidence-based intervention: A good mentor. A mentor is a caring, consistent presence who devotes times to a young person to help that young person discover personal strength and achieve their potential through a structured and trusting relationship. Mentoring provides young people, particularly those at risk for becoming disconnected from school and work, with important connections that lead to social and economic opportunity. Youth development experts agree that mentoring is critical to the social, emotional, and cognitive development of youth.

Academic studies have demonstrated that mentoring programs reduce levels of absenteeism, school violence, and recurring behavior problems. A recent report released by MENTOR: the National Mentoring Partnership, called [\*The Mentoring Effect\*](#), found that at-risk young adults who had a mentor are 55% more likely to be enrolled in college or other post-secondary education than their peers without mentors; 78% more likely to volunteer regularly in their communities; 81% more likely to participate in sports and other extracurricular activities; and more than twice as likely to hold a leadership position in a club, school council, or sports team. This first ever nationally representative survey of young people ages 18-21 on the topic of mentoring adds to a base of evidence that shows quality mentoring can produce positive outcomes for youth.

The same report found that one in three young people will reach age 19 without connecting with a mentor of any kind. Funding for Youth Mentoring Programs, which are administered by the Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, helps close this gap and ensures program quality to produce maximum positive outcomes. Youth Mentoring Programs have continued to receive solid support including \$100 million in Fiscal Year 2010, \$90 million in Fiscal Year 2013, and \$90 million in Fiscal Year 2015. Continued funding for these programs would save federal dollars over the long-term by reducing rates of incarceration and bolstering student achievement.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request to change the lives of our children and families.

Sincerely,

Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress

John Conyers, Jr.  
Member of Congress