MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership
Legislative Platform - 2020

PROTECT AND GROW INVESTMENT IN RELATIONSHIP-CENTERED SUPPORTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

➢ Youth Mentoring Program grant funded via the Commerce, Justice, Science appropriations bills is managed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention at the DOJ. The grant is a critical support for young people who are at-risk of entering the juvenile justice system and has assisted hundreds of thousands of young people in achieving positive personal, academic and professional outcomes. We call for $120 million in FY21.

➢ Robust investments in education are critical to supporting the academic, social, emotional, and healthy mental and physical development of young people. MENTOR supports investment in the following programs funded via the Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bills:
  o 21st Century Community Learning Centers. We call for $1.42 billion in FY21.
  o Full-Service Community Schools program. We call for $40 million in FY21.
  o Title IV-A Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants. We call for $1.6 billion in FY21.
  o Education, Innovation and Research (EIR) program grants. We call for $190 million in FY21.

➢ Shrinking the “Homework Gap” is critical to ensuring young people have equitable access to reliable Internet and other technological needs for effective learning and maintaining connections in school and at home. The FCC’s E-rate program funded via the Commerce, Justice, Science appropriations bills can effectively expand connectivity in schools and libraries serving communities across the country.

➢ National Service programs such as AmeriCorps VISTA and Senior Corps at CNCS provide critical support and capacity-building opportunities to hundreds of mentoring and youth-development organizations across the country. We call for $1.36 billion for CNCS in FY21.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION ELEVATING QUALITY MENTORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

Co-sponsor the Foster Youth Mentoring Act (H.R. 3061) which provides support for mentoring programs that serve youth in the foster care system. The Foster Youth Mentoring Act creates grants to establish or expand mentoring programs that serve foster youth. The bill seeks to fill a gap to provide foster youth with access to social capital and resources to support their emotional, academic, and career development.

House Sponsor: Karen Bass (CA-37) and Don Bacon (NE-02):
  Heather Zenone, heather.zenone@mail.house.gov or 5-7084 (Bass)
  Rachel Pearce, Rachel.pearce@mail.house.gov or 5-4155 (Bacon)

Co-sponsor the Chronic Absenteeism Reduction in Every School (CARES) Act (H.R. 4220) would establish school-based programs that pair mentors with students who are chronically absent and provide them with the necessary support systems to achieve success. The bill’s comprehensive approach to reducing chronic absenteeism uses real-time data collection on attendance, strategic integration of social services for tailored interventions and quality mentoring relationships to support students.

House sponsors: Tim Ryan (OH-13) and Jaime Herrera Beutler (WA-03):
  Rachel Jenkins, rachel.jenkins@mail.house.gov  5-5261 (Ryan)
  Jordan Evich, jordan.evich@mail.house.gov or 5-3536 (Herrera Beutler)
ADDITIONAL LEGISLATION SUPPORTED BY MENTOR

SCHOOL-RELATED LEGISLATION

H.R. 804: The Transition-to-Success Mentoring Act sponsored by Representative André Carson (IN-07) to establish a mentoring program for students who need extra support transitioning from middle to high school. The Transition-to-Success Mentoring Act focuses on supporting the individual needs of students by pairing them with a trained and caring adult mentor. Mentors begin working with students during this critical transition period and establish a plan to succeed in high school and beyond.

The DIPLOMA Act to be introduced by Representative Judy Chu (CA-27) and Senator Cory Booker (NJ) would provide federal grants to states to support community schools and develop comprehensive youth strategies.

The Full-Service Community Schools in Distressed Communities Act to be introduced by Senator Sherrod Brown (OH). This bill would provide grants to implement full-service community schools in areas affected by substance abuse epidemics.

The Mentoring to Succeed Act to be introduced by Senator Dick Durbin (IL), would help reduce violence in communities and expand quality school-based mentoring programs for students facing the greatest risks. The grant emphasizes trauma-informed care and interventions and establishes goals of improving college access and attainment, as well as workforce development and career exploration.

YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT LEGISLATION

H.R. 5236/S. 3144: The Youth Workforce Readiness Act sponsored by Representative Josh Harder (CA-10), Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-01), and Senator Tina Smith (MN). This bipartisan legislation would establish a competitive grant at the DOL for eligible national, youth-serving out-of-school time organizations geared towards four key pillars: essential-skills development, career exposure, employability and certification, work-based learning.

H.R. 2844/S. 1551: Creating Pathways for Youth Employment Act sponsored by Representative Robin Kelly (IL-02) and Senators Dick Durbin (IL) and Tammy Duckworth (IL) would make it easier for local governments and community organizations to apply directly for federal funding to create and expand summer and year-round employment programs for young people. The legislation would establish a five-year, $1.5 billion competitive grant program for youth summer employment and a five-year, $2 billion competitive grant program for youth year-round employment.

H.R. 2845/S. 1550: Helping to Encourage Real Opportunities (HERO) for At-Risk Youth Act sponsored by Representative Robin Kelly (IL-02) and Senators Dick Durbin (IL) and Tammy Duckworth (IL) would encourage the business community to become a partner in addressing youth unemployment by hiring at-risk youth that reside in communities with high rates of poverty by providing a tax credit of up to $2,400 to those business who hire and train youth 16-24 years old who are out of school and work, as well as those in or were part of the foster youth system.

STEM LEGISLATION

H.R. 4528/S.2578: The Women and Minorities in STEM Booster Act sponsored by Representative Carolyn Maloney (NY-12) and Senator Mazie Hirono (HI) would require the National Science Foundation to award grants for activities that increase participation of women and underrepresented minorities in STEM fields, including establishing mentoring programs between STEM professionals and students.

H.R. 4979: The Rural STEM Education Act sponsored by Representative Frank Lucas (OK-03). This bipartisan legislation would address the unique challenges rural schools districts face is recruiting qualified STEM educators, limited technology and infrastructure, and lack of local business partnerships. In addition to ensuring increased access to STEM curriculum, the bill would allow the creation of STEM-mentoring programs to support educators and students.
VIOLENCE PREVENTION LEGISLATION

H.R. 4167: Securing American Families by Education and Training You (SAFETY) Through Nonviolence Act sponsored by Representative John Lewis (GA-05) would award grants for the purpose of preventing or alleviating the effects of community violence through education, mentoring, and counseling related to the principles of nonviolence in conflict resolution.

TWO GENERATIONS LEGISLATION

H.R. 4334: The Dignity in Aging Act sponsored by Representative Suzanne Bonamici (OR-01) would establish, reauthorize, and revise programs managed by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services and the Dept. of Labor to care for the elderly. The bill includes language intended to promote volunteerism to senior citizens, including becoming a volunteer youth mentor.

BILL CONCEPTS THAT SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE

MENTOR is eager to work with Congressional offices interested in learning how quality, evidence-based mentoring can support their issue priorities. Some ideas we have percolating include:

Mentoring and College Access and Persistence: Mentoring is an important support strategy for students who are exploring plans to attend college or are currently enrolled. First-generation students, students from low-income families and underrepresented groups benefit from the academic, and social emotional support that mentors can provide as they navigate higher education. Research also demonstrates that mentoring can provide students with information and preparation about the admissions process and can help high school students achieve their academic goals towards college.

Mentoring young people with disabilities: Youth with disabilities often face barriers in lower expectations, fewer role models, and limited access to extracurricular activities and work experience; navigating the transition from school to post-secondary education and job placement can be especially challenging. Mentors can provide a critical support to these young people by enabling them to explore educational opportunities, social networks, and career pathways.

Mentoring Commercially Sex Trafficked Youth: The DOJ estimates the average age of entry into the commercial sex industry is 12-14 years old in the U.S. A study of girls who were commercially sex trafficked found that two of their most pressing needs were assistance in escape and mentoring or support from someone they could trust. This proposed bill would provide mentoring support to organizations that serve this population and provide them with the properly trained caring adults they deserve.

Youth unemployment and the value of mentoring: Approximately 5.5 million youth (ages 16-24) are disconnected from school or work. These young people are looking for opportunities to contribute to the private and public sector workforce in their communities. Mentoring, on the job training, and apprenticeships can support their transition into the workforce while offering skills that provide a pathway to a career.

Please Join the Congressional Youth Mentoring Caucus

To join the Caucus, House and Senate offices may contact: Brandon Mendoza Brandon.mendoza@mail.house.gov or 5-2040

Contact MENTOR: Abbie Evans (aevans@mentoring.org) and Adriane Alicea (aalicea@mentoring.org)
Critical Issues and the Role of Mentoring
The mentoring effect can be a powerful factor in reducing the number of youth disconnected from school and work, in increasing social and economic mobility, and in creating a more productive and prosperous nation. A conservative study of mentoring estimates a return of at least 3 dollars to every 1 dollar invested.

**Chronic absenteeism:** 1 in 8 students missed 3 weeks-plus of school in 2013-14. Not only does this affect literacy rates and a student’s ability to learn, it greatly increases the rates of students dropping out of school. *Students with mentors are 52% less likely to skip school and 37% less likely to skip class.*

**First Generation College Students:** First generation college students are twice as likely to drop out before their second year and less likely to be involved in clubs and student associations. 41% of black students and 61% of Hispanic students are first-generation, compared to about a quarter of their White and Asian American peers. *First generation college students who have a mentor are 10-15% more likely to advance to another year of college.*

**Youth People of Color:** Young people of color are at a disproportionate risk of being involved in the juvenile justice system, the child welfare system and dropping out of high school. They face discrimination and barriers in education, employment opportunities and access to social and economic capital. *Effective mentoring of young people of color helps build positive racial and ethnic identity, increases social capital, reduces risky behavior and demonstrates improved academic performance, mental health and social-emotional well-being.*

**Children of Incarcerated Parents:** Youth with a parent currently or formally incarcerated experience stress, disruption at home and school, and increased risk of trauma. These young people often struggle with resilience, coping skills and self-esteem. *Mentoring these children contributes to observable improvements in their behavior and engagement in and out of school, relationships, and emotional well-being.*

**Foster Youth:** Foster youth face challenges like increased risk of involvement with the juvenile justice system, educational disruptions and dropping out of school, teen pregnancy, homelessness, unemployment and substance abuse. Only 50% of foster youth complete high school by the time they are 18 and only between 2-9% obtain a bachelor’s degree. *Mentoring foster youth can provide a critical support system as they face multiple home displacements, educational disruptions and a need for stability. Mentored foster youth have demonstrated a reduction of risky behaviors, improved social-emotional well-being and graduation and college aspiration and attainment.*

**Youth Violence Prevention:** Violence negatively affects a young person whether they are a victim, witness or offender of violence. *Mentoring can help young people who have been victims of violence heal and can help youth who have engaged or are at-risk of being offenders of violence by providing them with role models who can support positive behavior and outcomes.*

**Sex Trafficking:** Children who are commercially sex trafficked often have experienced homelessness, are child welfare involved or have suffered sexual and emotional abuse. These youth are susceptible to negative health and life outcomes including substance abuse, suicide and post-traumatic stress-disorders. *Programs utilizing the experience and expertise of trafficking survivors as mentors generally see greater success when working with this population.*