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April 22, 2021

The Honorable Matthew Cartwright
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cartwright and Ranking Member Aderholt:

We write to thank you for your ongoing support of the **Part G Youth Mentoring Program**. This important competitive grant housed at the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in DOJ supports youth-serving organizations throughout the country as they provide our nation's young people with caring mentors during some of the most challenging times in their lives.

Mentoring has a positive effect on students; young people who meet regularly with their mentors are 52 percent less likely than their peers to skip a day of school. Evaluations of mentoring programs report significant increases among youth in self-confidence, self-efficacy and a positive attitude about their futures. Unfortunately, 1 in 3 young people in the United States reaches the age of 19 without having a mentor of any kind. This number includes 9 million youth facing risks who are missing out on the critical support and connections that mentoring can provide.

- **We support an investment of at least \$120 million for the OJJDP Youth Mentoring Program grant in FY22.** Mentoring is an effective prevention and intervention-based strategy for young people that decreases chronic absenteeism and youth violence, and increases critical-thinking, problem solving and other skills that support academic and workforce achievement, as well as life goal attainment.
- **We also support the call for \$100 million to ensure the restoration of OJJDP's internal staff levels** to at least 50 percent after considerable reductions in recent years. OJJDP's reduced staff has a direct impact on their ability to effectively and efficiently support states through their programs, including appropriate oversight of the Offices' grantees.

We must prioritize youth as part of pandemic recovery efforts. The past year of social distance, virtual schooling, and various personal, economic and community challenges have left an impact. When strategically integrated into initiatives, mentoring strengthens efforts to prevent drug and other substance use and misuse, supports young people experiencing opioid addiction in their families, and promotes healthy decision-making, positive behaviors, resiliency and strong futures. Additionally, effective mentoring can play a critical role in the social, emotional and mental health of young people – which is especially important in this time of recovery.

As a group of youth-serving organizations dedicated to ensuring young people are supported and set up for success, we recognize the importance of the Youth Mentoring Program grant. As the only mentoring-specific line item in the entire federal budget, we urge you to support these efforts by approving an increased appropriation for the program in the FY22 bill.

We appreciate your time. Please contact us should you require additional information.

Sincerely,

A World Fit For Kids!
Afterschool Alliance
America SCORES
America's Promise Alliance
BEST Kids
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America
Boys & Girls Clubs of America
California AfterSchool Network
Catholic Charities USA
Center for Supportive Schools (CSS)
Citizen Schools
City Year Inc.
College Mentors for Kids
Communities In Schools National Office
Encore.org
Friends of the Children
Girls Inc.
Goodwill Industries International, Inc.
Higher Achievement
iCouldBe
iMentor
Institute for Educational Leadership
MENTOR National
Mystic Aquarium
National 4-H Council
National Alliance of Faith and Justice
National Association of Police Athletic/Activities Leagues, Inc.
National Recreation and Park Association
Nueva Esperanza
Results for America
Search Institute
The Clubhouse Network
U.S. Dream Academy
U.S. Soccer Foundation
YMCA of the USA
Youth Collaboratory
YouthBuild USA

CC: House Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Subcommittee