



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SHERIFFS, POLICE CHIEFS, AND PROSECUTORS APPLAUD
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ACTION ON JUVENILE JUSTICE**
New legislation is evidence-based and will save taxpayer dollars

(Washington--) More than 5,000 law enforcement leaders of the crime prevention organization, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, applauded the U.S. House of Representatives, today, for introducing the [Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017](#), which strengthens existing law to reflect new research and to fund programs that can prevent juvenile offenders from becoming adult criminals.

The legislation encourages states to utilize interventions that have proven impacts on reducing recidivism as an alternative to custody. This update reflects research demonstrating that placing low-to-moderate offenders in custody is often counterproductive for the youth and detrimental to public safety. One landmark study found that for all but nine percent of juveniles facing custody—the very-high risk group—diversion to local, effective youth programs reduced the rate of re-offending more than placement in juvenile facilities.

“Our young people need every opportunity to learn and grow as contributing members of society,” said Chief of Police Roger Pohlman of Red Wing, Minnesota. **“The new bill introduced by Congressman Lewis is about getting youth back on track after making a wrong turn and advocating for a system that helps them develop. It is smart crime prevention that puts the interest of young people first.”**

The community-based, effective approaches funded by the bill can reduce recidivism rates by coaching youth and their families and addressing the root causes of many delinquent behaviors. Because they cut recidivism, the interventions can also save the public between \$9,000 and \$27,000 per youth served, a stark contrast to the \$88,000 average cost of one year for one youth in juvenile custody.

“This legislation benefits entire communities,” said Chief of Police Terry Sult of Hampton, Virginia. **“It puts politics aside and reinforces protections for children, grounded in evidence-based research. It allows us to get in front of the problem. As Congressman Bobby Scott knows and champions; when it comes to crime, prevention is always the best option.”**

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids thanks Representative Jason Lewis (R-MN) and House Education and the Workforce Committee Ranking Member Bobby Scott (D-VA) for their work as lead sponsors of the legislation. We urge both the House of Representatives and the Senate to pass juvenile justice reform without delay.

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Fight Crime: Invest in Kids is a non-profit, non-partisan organization of 5,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, and prosecutors who promote public safety through investments that prepare young people to grow up healthy, well-educated and well-prepared for lives free of the criminal justice system.