

Dear Hope,

Too few of our nation's young people are reaching adulthood ready for college, work and life. This is true in Indiana, where dropout rates are on the rise and employers report more and more difficulties finding qualified new employees.

While there are hundreds of federal, state and local programs that serve children and youth, they are not connected as part of an integrated strategy. Because of this disconnect, youth services are not working as efficiently or effectively as they could - and time, human resources and funding are often wasted.

We must work harder and smarter to improve the landscape of youth development. Creating a safety net for our young people and ensuring that all of their developmental needs are met requires bridging the disconnected efforts of youth serving agencies. By establishing common goals and developing and implementing coordinated strategies, we can better help young people achieve successful adulthood.

The Federal Youth Coordination Act (FYCA) of 2008 (H.R. 7004) seeks to create a White House Office on Children and Youth, which would strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of youth programs and services by:

- Coordinating leadership and vision across departments and agencies.
- Developing and overseeing interagency implementation of a National Youth Strategy, which would determine the outcomes our nation wants for its youth and the reforms necessary to achieve those results.
- Providing young people a voice in the policies that impact them directly.

Additionally, H.R. 7004 seeks to provide funding to states that want to create a cross-agency body to coordinate youth services at state and local levels. Indiana currently does not have such a body.

Your Support Improves the Odds for Youth. The FYCA should be introduced to the House of Representatives any day now. The Forum for Youth Investment and other national partners are working feverishly in Washington to gain support for the White House Office on Children and Youth. Once introduced to the House, it must then be considered by the Education & Labor Committee before being seen by the entire House. Representative Mark Souder of Indiana's 3rd Congressional District is a member of the committee - we need to let him know that this bill is important to the people of our state!

As the youth services intermediary for central Indiana, MCCOY has answered the call to rally support at the local level for this very important initiative.

Join us in championing the positive development of youth in Indiana and across the nation.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

MCCOY (Marion County Commission on Youth)