



U.S. Representative Mark Souder  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2231 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: Federal Youth Coordination Act of 2008**

Dear Representative Souder:

We, the undersigned, are writing to request your support for the Federal Youth Coordination Act of 2008 (H.R. 7004), which creates a White House Office on Children and Youth.

As Indiana's only Representative on the Education & Labor Committee, you have the unique opportunity to be a champion for the youth of our state by giving this bill full consideration and ensuring its passage through committee and onto the floor of the House.

**The Dilemma**

Far too few of the nation's young people are ready for college, work and life. Indiana's young people are no exception. The Federal government runs hundreds of programs to serve children and youth ages 0-24, spread across 12 departments and agencies. The vast majority of these efforts are essential and effective; however, they are not part of an integrated, strategic plan. The result is wasted resources as well as gaps in service that prevent many young people from achieving successful adulthood.

**The Solution**

The proposed White House Office on Children and Youth would strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of youth programs and services by:

- o Coordinating leadership and vision across departments and agencies;
- o 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; and
- o Providing young people a voice in the policies that impact them directly.

**Domestic and International Models**

The State Children's Cabinets and Councils Network reports that 24 states have established cross-agency coordinating bodies that are systematically changing the fragmented and ineffective way policies and programs serve children and youth by coordinating services, developing a common set of outcomes, and collaboratively developing and implementing plans to foster the well-being of young people. The same principle can and has worked at the local level in communities across the country and at the federal level in nations around the world.

**Currently, Indiana does not have such a body, but H.R. 7004 also seeks to provide start-up funding to states that wish to create one.**

As you know, federal efforts to coordinate youth policy have Congressional support. In 2005, the House of Representatives passed the Federal Youth Coordination Act (H.R. 856) by an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 353 to 62. Unfortunately, no funds were appropriated and the creation of the Office was put on hold. With your help, this can be the year our federal government proves its commitment to young people – and the future of this nation.

We thank you for your public service and your commitment to the young people of the Hoosier state. Establishing a White House Office on Children and Youth will elevate the work that you and we are doing on behalf of youth to the status it deserves.

