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July 20, 2015  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator,

On behalf of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in the United States and Canada, we commend Senators Casey, Inhofe, Peters, and Vitter for introducing S.1770 the *Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education (PROMISE) Act*. We urge you to support this legislation. The Youth PROMISE Act fits core principles of our Catholic faith, promoting the common good and dignity of the person.

In their 2000 pastoral letter *Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice*, the U.S. Catholic Bishops called “for problem-solving initially at the community level: family, neighborhood, city, state. This principle encourages communities to be more involved. Criminal activity is largely a local issue and, to the extent possible, should have local solutions.”

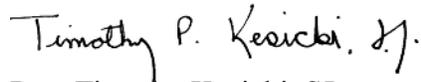
Many of our Jesuit ministries act on this principle by developing local solutions to cycles of poverty, trauma, and violence that afflict communities throughout the country. Our work supports and reintegrates young men and women through education, job training, tattoo removal, psycho-social support, social entrepreneurship, and various other solutions adapted to the local context of communities. While we have seen the power of innovative local initiatives to change lives and mitigate the root causes of violence, they are underfunded and underutilized in a criminal justice system that too often relies on costly incarceration to address youth violence.

The Youth PROMISE Act enables local solutions to be adapted to specific communities facing high levels of juvenile delinquency. It provides them grants to develop evidence-based approaches through the formation of local boards that include representatives from law enforcement, community-based organizations, schools, faith organizations, health and social services, and mental health providers. Grant recipients must demonstrate that their programming helps to reduce violence and juvenile delinquency in their communities through evidence-based research that ensures effective use of funding.

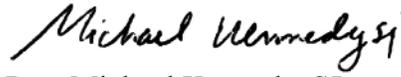
In addition, this legislation also builds on local strengths by partnering with colleges and universities and establishing a National Research Center for Proven Juvenile Justice Practices. Finally, the Act creates an average cost benefit of five dollars for every one dollar invested in juvenile delinquency prevention.

We believe the Youth PROMISE Act makes both fiscal and moral sense. By providing for creative preventative measures to reduce juvenile delinquency, the Act will make our communities safer, reduce the size of our prison system, and allow future generations to flourish. As a community of faith believing in the sacredness of human dignity and committed to fixing a broken juvenile justice system, we urge you to support the Youth PROMISE Act.

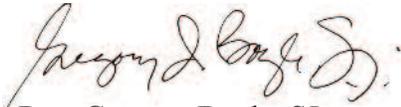
Sincerely,



Rev. Timothy Kesicki, SJ  
President,  
Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States



Rev. Michael Kennedy, SJ  
Executive Director,  
Jesuit Restorative Justice Initiative



Rev. Gregory Boyle, SJ  
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Rev. Fred Kammer SJ  
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