

Federal Youth Coordination Act



ACTION

- Pass the Federal Youth Coordination Act.

HISTORY

The Federal Youth Coordination Act (H.R. 856) passed the House in 2005. Representatives Tom Osborne (R-NE), Harold Ford (D-TN), Peter Hoekstra (R-MI), and Donald Payne (D-NJ) introduced this bipartisan legislation. The full Senate has not yet considered the Senate bill (S. 409). Norm Coleman (R-MN), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Lamar Alexander (R-TN), and Mike DeWine (R-OH) are leading Senate efforts.

The legislation would establish a national federal policy to promote positive youth development. Existing federal initiatives for young people primarily focus on behavior modification, such as drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, and delinquency, or are education-based.

The legislation responds to recommendations from the White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth. The task force convened in 2003 and was directed by President Bush to assess federal youth policy and develop recommendations that strengthen the federal response to the needs of children and youth, with a focus on coordination and accountability. The bipartisan task force looked at incorporating positive youth development practices that help disadvantaged youth while improving the effectiveness of federal programs aimed at youth.

The Federal Youth Coordination Act responds to the task force's recommendations by

- creating a federal body to facilitate interagency coordination and collaboration, coordinate federal research, and identify and replicate model programs; and
- supporting state-level coordination efforts.

The Federal Youth Coordination Act would also establish a Federal Youth Development Council. Key features and responsibilities include:

Membership

- Sixteen federal agency secretaries coming together to unite services for youth.
- Representatives from youth-serving nonprofits and faith-based organizations.
- Youth representatives from across the country.

The Federal Youth Development Council will:

- Facilitate communication among federal agencies serving youth.
- Assess youth needs and the quantity and quality of federal supports that help to meet these needs.
- Set quantifiable goals and objectives for federal youth programs and establish a plan to reach these goals.
- Develop demonstration projects that focus on special populations of youth.
- Identify and replicate model programs.
- Provide an annual report to the President and Congress, including

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- an assessment of the needs and well-being of youth;
- recommendations for stronger integration and coordination of federal, state, and local policies affecting youth; and
- a report on the Council's work to facilitate interagency collaboration and the results of the collaboration.

Support to States

- Provide technical assistance and, subject to the availability of appropriations, make grants to states to support state-level coordination efforts.
- States that have already initiated interagency coordination will receive priority.

KEY FACTS

- Approximately 14.3 million children, kindergarten through 12th grade, take care of themselves after school, including nearly 4 million middle school students, grades six through eight.
- Many young people are not supervised during after-school hours, 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. A recent study showed nearly 36% of children report spending time home alone after school at least once a week.
- In 2002, 15% of America's youth were disconnected from school and not working.
- Students who reported spending no time in school-sponsored afterschool activities were 57% more likely to drop out before 12th grade than students who spent one to four hours in such activities.
- The hours of 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on school days are the peak hours for teens to commit crimes, smoke, drink, use drugs, or engage in sexual activity.

Participation in afterschool programs is associated with better school performance, finer work habits, better interpersonal skills, and less time engaged in unhealthy behaviors.

Sources for statistical information are provided in the online version of this fact sheet. See www.cwla.org/advocacy/2006legagenda.htm.

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