



Media Advisory for Thursday, October 27 – White House Summit on Youth
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CAMPAIGN FOR YOUTH



As White House Convenes Conference on Youth ...

Campaign for Youth Calls for National Commitment to Improving Opportunities for Youth who are Out of School, Out of Work, and Out of the Mainstream

(Washington, DC) Youth employment rates are at record low levels. Nationally, as many as 32% of the students attending public high schools leave without obtaining a regular diploma, and only half of all students of color attending public high schools graduate. The situation is especially dismal for students in many of the nation's largest high-poverty urban and rural districts. Unless we do better, we will fall behind in an increasingly competitive world economy.

The National Academy of Science estimated that one in four adolescents in our nation is at serious risk of not achieving productive adulthood. More than 5.4 million youth (ages 16 – 24) are out of school and out of work, yet our nation lacks a coordinated national youth policy and commitment to making sure every young person has a safe passage to adulthood.

“As a nation we should be more than just concerned, we should be alarmed at the loss of such young talent and potential,” said Linda Harris, co-chair of the Campaign for Youth and Senior Policy Analyst at the Center for Law and Social Policy. “We cannot keep our economy strong, our communities safe and vibrant, and our young people on track unless we create the opportunities for these youth to be connected to the education, employment, counseling, skills, and credentials they need for successful adult life.”

Prevention programs are critical, but the Campaign for Youth hopes this year's White House Summit on Youth leads to a greater national commitment to policies and programs that re-connect those youth who are already out of school, out of work and out of the mainstream to the opportunities they need to prepare for their future roles as workers, parents, civic leaders and engaged members of caring communities.

“The White House Summit on Youth is an important step in drawing attention to the challenges in improving the life prospects of our nation's young, and the ways families and communities are meeting those challenges,” said Sally Prouty, President of the National Association of Conservation and Service Corps and co-chair of the Campaign for Youth.

Over the years the federal investment in youth employment programs has decreased dramatically, from \$15 billion in 1979 (real dollars) to \$3 billion today. CFY calls for expanding and targeting public investment to reconnect the millions of young people who are now out of school without academic credentials, without jobs, and without skills to the education, training, and supports they need to complete their education, get a job, and get back on track

“We know what works. But without adequate, sustained and targeted funding, we can't build on what we know to assure young people they will get the job training, academic opportunities, and

assistance they need to succeed and become responsible adults,” said Dorothy Stoneman, President of Youthbuild USA and steering committee member of the Campaign for Youth.

The Campaign for Youth has submitted to the President a Memo on Re-Connecting our Youth, signed by over 250 national, state, and local organizations, that lays out critical recommendations for improving policies and programs to reach and re-connect youth at risk. Members of the Campaign for Youth, in tandem with other national policy organizations, are taking action at the federal and state levels to elevate attention to a neglected youth population and to advance the recommendations contained in the memo.

The Memo on Re-Connecting Our Youth, along with an up-to-date list of organizations signing onto the Memo, fact sheets, briefing papers and important links to research related to each of the memo’s recommendations can be found at:

<http://www.clasp.org/campaignforyouth>.



The Campaign for Youth was established in 2002 in an effort to build a united voice for vulnerable and disconnected youth in this nation.

Steering Committee

Linda Harris, *Center for Law and Social Policy, Co-chair*

Sally Prouty, *National Association of Community Conservation Corps, Co-Chair*

Thad Ferber, *Forum for Youth Investment*

Dorothy Stoneman, *Youthbuild USA*

David Brown, *National Youth Employment Coalition*

Mark Soler, *National Youth Law Center*

Philip Lovell, *National Collaboration for Youth*

Jan Richter, *Connect for Kids*

Marion Pines, *Sar Levitan Center, Institute for Policy Studies, JHU*

Eugene Sofer, *Susquehanna Group*

John Briscoe, *National Council of Churches, USA*

Darnell Leacock, *Youth Representative*

Natalia Diaz, *Youth Representative*