



# CAMPAIGN FOR YOUTH

January 29, 2009

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*National Youth  
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**James Wagoner**  
*Advocates for Youth*

The Hon. Harry Reid, Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
361-A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell:

On behalf of the Campaign for Youth, an alliance of national youth serving organizations who are concerned about the challenges confronting more than 5 million young people in this nation who are disconnected from education, employment and opportunity, we thank you for your hard work and rapid response to revive the American economy. We are pleased that the proposed American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan includes immediate resources that will create jobs and provide much needed supports for America's families, as well as, critical investments in infrastructure, education, and workforce development that will have an enduring impact on the nation's future economic condition.

Young people have been particularly hard hit during this economic downturn, facing their lowest employment levels in 60 years, with a teen employment rate this past summer of only 32.7 percent and just 20 percent for black teens. The Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University estimates that youth under 25 years old accounted for 60% of the 1.2 million job losses reported during this past year.

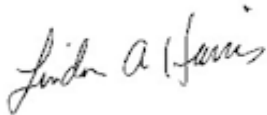
We feel it is important that young people are fully engaged as part of the recovery and rebuilding of the nation's economy and infrastructure. It sends a message that economic recovery is inclusive and that opportunities created through these investments will be a source of hope and renewal for youth who have been dramatically impacted by lack of jobs, lack of skills, and lack of access. **Thus, in support of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 goals, and as you deliberate over the economic recovery package, we ask that you support a provision that would target an amount equal to at least 1% of the recovery package to provide education, training, civic engagement, work experience, and employment pipelines to connect disadvantaged and disconnected youth and young adults to good jobs that are created as a result of economic recovery and revitalization.** These critical investments in the short term will be a much needed down-payment on the work that the Nation must do to retool our young workers to provide the brain power, manpower, and skills to fuel the economy of the future.

The Campaign for Youth represents a constituency of hundreds of local leaders, practitioners, and programs in communities across the country that have been implementing promising practices and research-based strategies to reengage these young people. These programs, many of which have persistent waiting lists, have extensive experience working with troubled youth. With the flow of federal investments, we are confident that youth serving systems have the capacity to absorb funds, deliver quality programming and place young people in jobs across the nation.

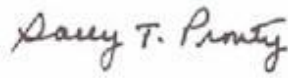
We applaud the Congressional leadership and commitment to make significant investments in the nation's infrastructure - creating jobs and service opportunities for millions of Americans, and we especially ask that through your deliberations, you continue to consider the 5 million plus youth and young adults that are disconnected from work, school, and opportunity.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our recommendations please contact Kisha Bird, Project Director, Campaign for Youth, at (202) 906-8020.

Sincerely,



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



Sally Prouty  
The Corps Network  
Co-chair, Campaign for Youth