

YOUTH Policy ACTION Center

News Release

Embargoed for Release:
April 18, 2005, 12:01am

Contact:
Kalisha Davis, 202-207-3335

More Than 30 Advocacy Organizations Join Forces to Promote Political Action By and For Youth

Washington, D.C. — April 18, 2005 — More than 30 of the country's leading national advocacy organizations have launched an unprecedented partnership to raise awareness and generate support for children and youth policies through political activism.

The Youth Policy Action Center is a Web-based resource that helps youth and concerned adults be heard in Washington. The Web site allows thousands of youth and adults to regularly contact elected officials about important programs and initiatives – especially in the critical days before votes are cast on the floor of Congress. Advocates contend that this innovative effort is not only an important step, but an increasingly necessary one.

“The Youth Policy Action Center gives young people a platform on which to stand and be counted in the national debate and dialogue,” says Thaddeus Ferber, program director at Forum for Youth Investment, which helped orchestrate the joint effort. “It gives national advocacy organizations a way to come together and act as one. And it gives ordinary citizens – concerned parents, proud grandparents, dedicated teachers – political power which used to be the exclusive providence of entrenched special interest lobbyists.”

This venture strives to level the political playing field for those who believe young people are the nation's most precious resource. National organizations united behind this effort include America's Promise, the Child Welfare League of America and Youth Service America. Each group recognizes the immediate benefits that such an endeavor can offer to their individual efforts, as well as to the broader youth field.

“While well-paid lobbyists successfully fight for a variety of special interest groups, children and youth are often left behind in the battles for ideas and dollars,” says David Smith, executive director of Mobilizing America's Youth, which also helped launch the effort. “We want to give young people and concerned adults the same opportunity to be informed, engaged and empowered in advocacy as senior citizens have through the AARP. It is only fitting that on National Service Day we give young people the opportunity not only to volunteer time in their community, but to participate in their democracy.”

Currently, the Youth Policy Action Center offers visitors the opportunity to take action on a range of issues policies and legislation, including funding for education, youth employment programs (such as YouthBuild), civic engagement programs (such as Learn and Serve America), and government accountability efforts (such as the Federal Youth Coordination Act).

The site has already attracted the attention of Capitol Advantage, which donated a free year of their award winning service. Says Robert Hansan, president of Capitol Advantage, “It's today's youth that will be the ones to master the internet and technology to bring about change and affect public policy. Capitol Advantage is proud to provide them with the tools to have their voices heard.”

Visit the Youth Policy Action Center Web site: <http://www.youthpolicyactioncenter.org>.

Reporters: sign up on the site for bi-weekly updates to help you stay on top of the issues at the forefront of leading advocates' campaigns.

Organizations Participating in the Youth Policy Action Center

(as of April 18, 2005)

- 18-to-35
- Action Without Borders/Idealist.org
- Afterschool Alliance
- Alliance for Children and Families
- America's Promise
- American Youth Policy Forum
- Campaign for Youth
- Center for Law and Social Policy
- Child Welfare League of America
- City Year
- Connect for Kids
- Forum for Youth Investment
- Innovation Center for Community Youth Development
- Juvenile Law Center
- Mobilizing America's Youth
- National Association of Service and Conservation Corps
- National Collaboration for Youth
- National Institute on Out-of-School Time
- National Network for Youth
- National Organization of Concerned Black Men, Inc.
- National Youth Employment Coalition
- National Youth Rights Association
- National Youth Leadership Council
- New Ways to Work
- Public Education Network
- Public Interest Research Group (PIRG)
- Students for Sensible Drug Policy
- US Students Association
- Voices for National Service
- Youth Service America
- YouthBuild USA