

Mikva Challenge  
25 East Washington Street, Suite 820  
Chicago, IL 60602

January 23, 2009

The Honorable President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As members of the Mikva Challenge Youth Safety Council, we ask for your support in using approximately 1-3% of the \$825 billion stimulus package called the “American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan” for a nationwide expansion of youth employment.

Unemployment recently has increased due to the growing U.S. economic recession. Jobless youth have it worse; not only do they tend to drop out of school, but they also have a propensity for remaining underemployed or unemployed in their later life. Statistics show that 700,000 youths between the ages of 16 and 19 lost their jobs as opposed to the 500,000 people between the ages of 20 to 30. Indeed, young people are the most vulnerable victims of joblessness, ultimately missing both the skills and opportunity to become economically self-sufficient.

The Mikva Challenge Youth Safety Council is concerned that unemployment will encumber the financial future of American youth. As economically disadvantaged teenagers, we have seen the direct effects of being without a job has on young job seekers. In the coming weeks, we will be conducting a youth job survey in Chicago Public Schools to confirm whether work opportunities guarantee socioeconomic security amongst youth or not. We would like to include statements regarding your position. Will you make it clear to us whether you are in favor of this proposal?

Your administration and Congress must address youth unemployment as part of the country’s unfathomable economic predicament by means of re-establishing the federal summer jobs program and offering subsidized jobs for youth in both public and private sectors. Part-time jobs not only provide stipends but also teach young people essential workplace skills and construct work histories, thereby attracting prospective employers to them.

The Youth Safety Council would like to witness you sponsor such a bill in order to provide youth, especially those who are endangered or economically disadvantaged, with social services and job opportunities that could somehow revitalize the U.S. economy.

Thank you for your time and kind consideration. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,  
Members of the Mikva Challenge Youth Safety Council