



The Peace Alliance



STUDENT PEACE ALLIANCE

## Key Highlights

The primary purpose of a United States Department of Peace will be to reduce and prevent violence domestically and internationally. It will make the cultivation of peace a strategic policy objective within the US government.

### The Urgent Need for a Department of Peace

- ❖ Domestically
  - Criminal and domestic violence place intense pressure on city, county, and state resources (for example, 80% of all police runs in Detroit are in response to domestic violence)
  - The World Health Organization estimates we spend \$300 billion annually just on violence that occurs within our country—meaning every three years we spend almost a *trillion dollars* reacting to violence
  - The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identifies violence as a leading public health issue in the United States—and one that can be prevented.
- ❖ Internationally
  - We live in a world in which military solutions alone are entirely insufficient to ensure national security
  - Nuclear arsenals—both those friendly and hostile to the United States—are susceptible to terrorist attack or theft
  - Terrorism presents new challenges that must be met with new capabilities

### Addressing Causal Issues

- ❖ Current policy-making tends toward reactive, not proactive approaches to violence reduction
- ❖ Traditional political problem-solving focuses primarily on addressing *symptoms* of conflict, through activities such as imprisonment of offenders and engagement in armed conflict
- ❖ Suppression of symptoms must be augmented by stronger preventative measures and treatment of root causes of violence
- ❖ The United States should be as effective in addressing the sources of violence as we are effective in addressing its symptoms

### We Need a Department of Peace to ...

- ❖ Reduce and prevent violence domestically and internationally
- ❖ Gather and coordinate best practices from the peace community
- ❖ Find, fund and expand programs proven to reduce and prevent violence
- ❖ Expand our nation's civilian capacity for peacebuilding and nonviolent conflict intervention
- ❖ Help teach violence prevention and peer mediation skills to America's school children
- ❖ Focus on addressing the root causes of terrorism, rather than just preventing the next terrorist attack
- ❖ Support our military with complementary approaches to ending violence, and with post-conflict reconstruction
- ❖ Coordinate the violence reduction and prevention efforts of the U.S. government to ensure a sophisticated, strategic, cost-effective approach

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## **Proposed Federal Legislation to Establish a U.S. Department of Peace**

- ❖ In February 2009, during the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, the bill was reintroduced into the House of Representatives (H.R. 808)
- ❖ Bill was previously introduced into the U. S. House of Representatives during the 107<sup>th</sup>, 108<sup>th</sup>, 109<sup>th</sup> and 110<sup>th</sup> Congresses
- ❖ There are currently 66 committed co-sponsors in the House of Representatives
- ❖ Proposed legislation calls for the Department's budget to be \$10 billion, 85% of which must be used for domestic peace programs

### **The Benefits: Domestic**

- ❖ The Department of Peace will:
  - Develop field-tested educational programs promoting conflict resolution and peer mediation among school-age children
  - Provide violence prevention programs addressing domestic violence, gang violence, drug and alcohol related violence, and the like
  - Provide much needed assistance for the efforts of city, county, and state governments in coordinating existing programs in their own communities, as well as programs newly developed and provided through the Department of Peace

### **The Benefits: International**

- ❖ The Department of Peace will:
  - Advise the President, the Secretaries of Defense and State, and others with conflict analysis, plus practical ways to prevent or reduce violence before it escalates
  - Support the military by:
    - Providing cultural, ethnic and psychologically insightful information, education and technology
    - Offering practical skills (e.g., nonviolent conflict intervention techniques) for the reduction of violence among adversarial factions
    - Administer the training and support of civilian peacekeepers to participate in multinational nonviolent peace forces

### **Responsibilities of the Secretary of Peace**

- ❖ In addition to leading the Department, the Secretary shall:
  - Provide the President with research-based recommendations on how a specific policy either increases or diminishes the prospect of domestic and international peace
  - Work proactively and interactively with each branch of the Government on all policy matters relating to conditions of peace

### **A U.S. Peace Academy**

- ❖ H.R. 808 establishes a U.S. Peace Academy, acting as a sister organization to the military service academies
- ❖ The Academy will research and teach the most cutting-edge techniques for the reduction of violence both domestically and globally
- ❖ The Peace Academy will join the military service academies in providing assistance to the military in international conflict resolution
- ❖ The Peace Academy faculty will be derived from well-established practitioners known for best practices in the field of violence reduction and conflict resolution