

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0529**

February 27, 2014

Dear President Obama:

Thank you for inviting me to join you as you announce your new initiative, "My Brother's Keeper," to help African American and Latino youth reach their full potential. Programs that focus on youth development are very important to districts such as the one I represent, and I applaud your partnership with foundations and the business community to enhance the scope and reach of these efforts.

As you coordinate the roll out of your new project, I offer my assistance to you. California and the heavily Latino district I represent have a great need for community-based efforts and wrap-around services that support youth and their families. In recent years, we have seen great results in the City of Los Angeles tackling issues such as school attendance, youth violence prevention and gang intervention.

"My Brother's Keeper" focuses on areas on which I have long advocated and legislated. Throughout my 17-year career as an elected official, including tenures in the California State Assembly and Los Angeles City Council, I have successfully advanced effective youth development and juvenile justice policy and legislation.

In 2000, I co-authored and passed AB 1913, the Schiff-Cárdenas Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act. This bill provided local communities with approximately \$120 million annually, the single largest appropriation of state funds for youth crime prevention in the history of the United States. The bill was designed to counter-balance rising incarceration costs. Since enactment, it has provided over a billion dollars for youth development services and programming, helping to drastically reduce juvenile crime throughout the state of California.

I believe your initiative could benefit from the experience I gained as the chair of an internationally renowned advisory committee that developed the nation's first comprehensive "Community Based Gang-Intervention Model." This model was developed by intervention practitioners themselves and has been used throughout the U.S. The model has also been translated into Spanish and utilized throughout Latin America where it has been effective in addressing gang violence and has helped to reduce gang involvement.

Before leaving the Los Angeles City Council, I spearheaded the historic five-year citywide campaign to amend Los Angeles' daytime curfew ordinance that prevented 43,000 tickets from being issued to tardy students for such uncontrollable circumstances as having their bus run late or taking a younger sibling to school. Working with police chiefs, the head of the juvenile court system, the school district and community-based organizations, I developed and implemented this historic policy campaign that increased student attendance and led to a 60% decrease in daytime curfew citations in the first year.

As a freshman Member of the House of Representatives, I am preparing to unveil a bipartisan Crime Prevention and Youth Development Caucus to examine ways to further evidence-based prevention and intervention initiatives for at-risk youth, reduce crime in communities and implement smart youth justice alternatives that reduce budget expenditures at the state and local level. Already, we have a bipartisan Congressional membership that includes former Sheriff Rep. David Reichert (R-WA), former judge Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX), and youth advocate Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA).

Our new Congressional Caucus is committed to working with our colleagues to support youth development by educating Members and promoting legislative and administrative solutions, as well as coordinating with federal, state and local policymakers on cost effective, evidence-based solutions.

Based on my experience, I would like to request a meeting to further discuss your new initiative and ways we could work together to support your efforts and our many shared priorities.

Thank you for your commitment to our nation's youth and for helping shine a light on the opportunities that are possible for them. I look forward to working with you as "My Brother's Keeper" takes shape.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tony Cardenas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "T" and "C".

TONY CÁRDENAS  
Member of Congress