



**Alliance for
Peacebuilding**

[PRESS RELEASE](#)

AfP Welcomes New Bipartisan U.S. Legislation To Champion Youth, Peace, and Security

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Photo Courtesy of Generations for Peace

Washington, D.C., USA. – The Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP) welcomes the introduction of [H.R. 6174, the Youth, Peace and Security Act](#) of 2020, by Representatives Grace Meng (D-NY), Susan Brooks (R-IN), Dean Phillips (D-MN)



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and John Curtis (R-UT) in the United States House of Representatives today. The bill recognizes profound structural barriers faced by young people seeking to drive positive change in their home countries. The Youth, Peace and Security Act of 2020 (YPS Act) would require the U.S. government – in collaboration with global civil society – to establish a policy of support for youth peacebuilders and increase U.S. direct assistance for youth-led peacebuilding programs. **By establishing a U.S. policy for promoting youth peacebuilding and creating a dedicated funding stream, the YPS Act will enable the United States to more effectively reduce and prevent conflict and promoting sustainable peace worldwide, while ensuring a more equitable distribution of power dynamics.**

AfP President and CEO Uzra Zeya commented, “All too often, young people are seen as a threat to, rather than a vital element of building resilient, peaceful societies. The YPS Act changes that dynamic by elevating youth leadership in breaking global cycles of violence and integrating their perspectives into U.S. diplomacy and development assistance. AfP is proud to co-lead a coalition of more than 30 non-governmental organizations supporting this breakthrough bill.”

In 2014, the world’s youth population [rose to 1.8 billion](#), eclipsing the adult population in scores of developing countries. It is estimated that one in four young people today are living in or are otherwise affected by armed conflicts and violence. Youth populations have long been at the forefront of grassroots efforts for peace and justice – creating youth-led movements, organizations, and networks to prevent recurring cycles of violence, mitigate negative effects of conflict, and strengthen social cohesion and resilience. Young people also play vital roles in preventing recurring cycles of violence and becoming the primary [grassroots actors in conflict-affected areas](#).



Photo Courtesy of Search for Common Ground



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This bill establishes a U.S. policy for the meaningful participation of youth in overseas peacebuilding and conflict prevention, management, resolution, and recovery efforts, where youth remain underrepresented despite proven capacities and contributions. In numerous evaluations and studies, [young people have reported feeling systematically excluded and even stigmatized](#) by national policies as well as foreign assistance in their country—which renders U.S. foreign assistance less effective in fragile environments, as young people are often the population majority and catalytic leaders in building more just and peaceful states. By supporting young peacebuilders, the U.S. can achieve cost-effective impact. Globally, [most youth-led organizations operate on less than \\$10,000 a year](#) and are staffed by volunteers; empowering young leaders delivers a huge return on a relatively modest investment.

AfP is proud to co-lead – with Search for Common Ground, Generations for Peace, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Peace Direct, and UNOY — a coalition of more than 30 non-governmental organizations in support of this vital legislation and commends Congressional co-sponsors for elevating U.S. leadership on youth-led peacebuilding. Adoption of this bill would make the United States the first country to mandate YPS as a foreign policy and assistance priority, and we welcome further bipartisan support and youth engagement towards this goal.

With over 110 member organizations, AfP brings together the largest development organizations, most innovative academic institutions, and influential humanitarian and faith-based groups to harness collective action for peace. We build coalitions in key areas of strategy and policy to elevate the entire peacebuilding field, tackling issues too large for any one organization to address alone.