



January 26, 2018

Dear Member of the New Mexico General Assembly,

As members of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, a nationwide, bipartisan, non-profit organization of more than 5,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, and violence survivors – including 62 members in New Mexico – we are committed to research-based solutions that prevent crime. Research confirms that high-quality home visiting programs, like New Mexico's Nurse-Family Partnership and Parents as Teachers, can reduce child abuse and neglect, and decrease the chances that a child will become involved in crime later in life. For that reason, **we urge you continue these investments in home visiting programs this year and prioritize them for growth.**

Voluntary home visiting programs pairs at-risk mothers with nurses, social workers, or paraprofessionals during pregnancy to support the family until the child turns two or three. The practitioners work with parents to access prenatal care, connect the family to community resources, and coach them on parenting skills. New parents learn ways to manage stress, develop techniques to guide their children away from problem behaviors, and learn about the importance of reading and talking with their children.

Along with equipping parents with new skills, research highlights impressive outcomes for reducing child abuse and neglect, and improving long-term public safety. Rigorous studies show that home visiting programs can **cut child abuse and neglect in half among participating families.** Child abuse and neglect remain a problem in New Mexico. According to a recent report from the New Mexico Department of Children, Youth and Families Department, there were almost 21,000 reports of abuse or neglect between July 2015 and June 2016. Experience also tells us that many more cases of abuse and neglect go unreported to law enforcement.

In addition to reducing child abuse and neglect, research shows high-quality home visiting can decrease the likelihood that the mother will be involved in crime and reduce the likelihood that the child will grow up to be involved in crime. A randomized controlled trial of the Nurse-Family Partnership showed that **women who did not receive home visits had more than three and half times as many convictions 15 years later**, compared to women who participated in the program. **Children who were not part of the program had more than two times as many convictions for crimes by age 19**, compared to children whose mothers participated in the program.



As law enforcement leaders, we are often the ones called to respond to the tragedies associated with child abuse and neglect. **Increased investment in evidence-based home visiting programs can help us reduce violence towards children and break the cycle of abuse that families often experience.** We urge you to prioritize funding for these essential programs in your upcoming budget.

Sincerely,

Lemuel Martinez
District Attorney
13th Judicial District

/s/

Dianna Luce
District Attorney
5th Judicial District

Donald Gallegos
District Attorney
8th Judicial District

/s/

Angela Byrd
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