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*Hundreds of Police Chiefs, Sheriffs,
Prosecutors, other Law Enforcement
Leaders, and Violence Survivors
Preventing Crime and Violence*

Testimony
2016 Joint Legislative Hearing
Human Services Committee
Sheriff Craig Apple, Albany County
February 9, 2016

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Thank you, Members of the Committee, for giving me the opportunity to testify today.

I am a member of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, an organization of more than 250 police chiefs, sheriffs, district attorneys and crime survivors across the state who support proven investments in children.

I am here to speak with you about how, as a leader in law enforcement, I know that investing in home visiting can not only reduce child abuse, but also prevent crime in New York State.

Nothing can fully prepare a law enforcement officer to walk into a home where child abuse has taken place. The terrible experience of removing children from their homes is one reason we members of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids are so committed to addressing child abuse or neglect *before* children are hurt. Every year in New York State, there are enough abused and neglected children to fill Madison Square Garden almost four times. Almost four times.

In addition to protecting children, law enforcement leaders want to prevent abuse and neglect because it's a powerful crime prevention strategy. Researchers have found that maltreatment contributes to future crime. While most survivors of childhood abuse and neglect never become criminals, research shows that an estimated 3,000 victims of abuse and neglect in 2010 will later become violent criminals who otherwise would have avoided such crimes if not for the abuse and neglect they endured as children.

Home visiting optimizes early development to give kids the right start in life. Investing early in a child's life is also just fiscally smart. I know – because I'm the guy you pay later. We currently spend \$2.8 billion a year incarcerating about 66,000 people. A strong sustained investment in home visiting programs, like Healthy Families New York, could help.

If New York invests wisely in what works, fewer of our officers and deputies will find themselves carrying children away from abusive or neglectful homes, and fewer New Yorkers will become the victims of violence in the future.

There are currently four research-based home visiting programs operating in New York State (in addition to the federally-funded Early Head Start program): Healthy Families New York, Nurse-Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, and The Parent-Child Home Program, Inc. Each of these programs is critically important to ensuring

that the 250,000 babies born each year are born into supportive environments, and that their caregivers are well-equipped to handle the challenges of parenthood.

We ask that you increase funding to Healthy Families New York by \$4.5 million to \$27.8 million in the OCFS budget. We also urge you to invest a total of \$5 million to support Nurse-Family Partnership; add \$3 million for Parents As Teachers; and add \$2 million for the Parent-Child Home Program. Extending investment to these other programs will strengthen the service continuum for New York families.