



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

Testimony

2015 Joint Legislative Hearing

Human Services Committee

Albany County Sheriff Craig Apple

February 4, 2015

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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 about 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 maternal, infant, and early childhood home visiting can not only reduce child abuse, but prevent crime in New York State.

The Healthy Families New York home visiting program has been shown to significantly reduce first-time and subsequent abuse. However, since 2008, the program has been flat-funded. Let's not kid ourselves—this is a cut. A 15% cut to services that prevent child abuse. How are we o.k. with that?

In 2013, there were 156,303 suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. The true numbers may be higher because many cases of abuse and neglect are not reported. How are we o.k. with that?

I am not o.k. with that. I am not o.k. with programs being forced to limit father involvement services and outreach to vulnerable families. I am not o.k. with programs laying off staff who have forged relationships with those families.

This ongoing cut to services means that families are involved in the program for shorter lengths of time, directly impacting infants' and families' successful outcomes, which are linked to length and level of participation. I am not o.k. with that.

If New York State doesn't invest in prevention now, I guarantee that we will pay the criminal justice system later. We currently spend \$2.8 billion a year incarcerating about 66,000 people. I would rather invest in home visiting programs, like Healthy Families New York.

In addition to the child abusers we lock up today, we will spend more money to lock up future abusers. 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. How are we o.k. with perpetuating this cycle of abuse?

If you would restore funding in the amount of \$3.5 million this year, bringing funding for Healthy Families New York back up to where it was in 2008, I would be o.k. with that.

Thank you.