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FIGHT CRIME: Invest in Kids

Thousands of Police Chiefs, Sheriffs, Prosecutors, other Law Enforcement Executives, and Violence Survivors Preventing Crime and Violence

March 16, 2015

The Honorable Asa Hutchinson
State Capitol
500 Woodlane Street, Suite 250
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Governor Hutchinson,

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids is a national, non-profit, non-partisan organization of nearly 5,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, and prosecutors nationwide – including 37 members in Arkansas – who take a hard-nosed look at the research on what works to prevent kids from becoming criminals and inform policymakers and the public on that research. **The undersigned law enforcement members of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids urge the legislature to increase funding for the Arkansas Better Chance Pre-K Program by $15 million or more. The Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Program is committed to giving children a strong start through evidence-based solutions as they begin kindergarten.**

Quality early learning programs can significantly reduce future crime rates and save taxpayer dollars. A study that followed children who participated in high-quality pre-kindergarten and parent coaching programs through Chicago's Child-Parent Centers found they were 20 percent less likely to be arrested for a felony or be incarcerated as young adults than those who did not attend.

Other research on early learning around the nation that looked at various outcomes have found important results, including reduced child abuse and neglect; better school outcomes; less costly special education and fewer kids being held back in school; more kids ahead in reading and math; and fewer dropouts. That's important for everyone who cares about public safety because seven out of 10 inmates in state prisons do not have a high school diploma.

A longitudinal study found that ABC participants had higher vocabulary and mathematics scores when entering kindergarten, compared to children who did not attend. These benefits were maintained at least through the end of second grade. Further, children who attended ABC were less likely to have been held back by the end of third grade than those who did not attend any pre-K.

The ABC Program can be an important crime prevention tool to keep our communities safe and prosperous. Unfortunately, there has not been an increase in program funding, even for cost-of-living, since 2008. Additional funding is necessary to sustain the Arkansas Better

Chance Program at its current level of operation. Arkansas law enforcement leaders would be thrilled to see an investment that will support kids today and lower crime in the years to come. We urge you to support at least a $15 million funding increase to ensure our communities remain safe and our kids get the right start in life.

Sincerely,



Kirk Lane, Chief of Police
Benton Police Department



Randy Reid, Chief of Police
Glenwood Police Department