FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS
COUNCIL FOR A STRONG AMERICA

May 2022

Dear Members of the 117th Congress,

As you are well aware, crime has been on the rise across the nation over the past two years of the pandemic. Concurrently, a recent MIT study of the Boston preschool program reflects the reality that a lack of early educational opportunities can be a root cause of criminality, finding that preschool enrollees were less likely to have been incarcerated in a juvenile facility during high school, compared to non-enrollees.[1]

On behalf of the more than 5,000 police chiefs, sheriffs and prosecutors who are members of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, and who support solutions to reduce crime and support healthy child and youth development, we call on Congress to **prioritize funding for existing early childhood care and education (ECE), like pre-k programs. We call on Congress to invest in preschool and child care programs across the country, so that more children, particularly those from families with low-incomes, are prepared to learn and succeed when they begin kindergarten.**

Specifically, we request prioritizing quality improvement funds to be allocated within **Head Start, Child Care Development Block Grants (CCDBG), and Preschool Development Grants.** As law enforcement leaders, we know first-hand the wisdom of investing in early interventions. We also understand how interconnected the child care and pre-k systems are in facilitating successful futures. Many preschool programs are delivered within community- and home-based child care programs. Many child care programs rely on the tuition they receive from families of preschoolers to counterbalance the higher cost of infant-and-toddler care. Therefore, a holistic approach to the ECE system that emphasizes quality is essential.

Children who attend high-quality ECE are more likely to arrive at kindergarten ready to learn, with enhanced early math, language, and literacy skills. They are also less likely to be held back in school or to need special education, and more likely to be proficient in reading and math and to have an increased probability of graduating from high school.

As law enforcement leaders, we strive to keep our communities safe. Congress acting to invest in early childhood education and urging federal agencies to provide flexible guidance

[1]Gray-Lobe, G., Pathak, P., & Walters, C. (2021, May). The long-term effects of universal preschool in Boston. https://blueprintcdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Blueprint-Labs-Discussion-Paper-2021.4-Gray-Lobe-Pathak-and-Walters.pdf

and strategies will help us achieve the goal of providing interventions proven to reduce juvenile crime, create safe communities, and forge a strong, productive nation.

Respectfully,