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Preventing Crime and Violence

Testimony

2013 Joint Legislative Hearing

Health Committee

Timmy J. Currier, Chief of Police, Massena, NY

January 30, 2013

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Timmy J. Currier, Chief of Police, Massena, NY
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Members of the Committee, I thank you for listening to my testimony today.

I am Timmy J. Currier, the Chief of Police in Massena, NY. I am a co-chair of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, an organization of more than 300 police chiefs, sheriffs, district attorneys and crime survivors across the state who support investments in proven prevention strategies. I thank Renee for setting the stage for this discussion.

I am here today to speak with you about the importance of funding the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) home visiting program. I ask that you restore \$2.5 million in the State Budget to help support the sustainability of NFP. That funding, which you generously provided last year, would provide much needed services for pregnant women and young children. I don't have the NFP program in my county, but with funding to expand services, I hope to someday.

You may think it odd that a police chief wants to talk to you about maternal, prenatal and early childhood home visiting. So let me give you some reasons for my remarks.

While most survivors of childhood abuse and neglect never become violent criminals, research shows that an estimated 3,000 of the 77,000 victims of abuse and neglect in New York 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.

The randomized control trial of the NFP program showed that children of participating mothers had 48% fewer substantiated reports of abuse or neglect than the children of mothers in the control group, indicating that home visiting can cut abuse and neglect nearly in half among at-risk children.ⁱ The children left out of the program also had more than twice as many arrests by age 15, and they were twice as likely to be convicted by age 19.ⁱⁱ

These large reductions in abuse, neglect and crime mean that home visiting can save far more than it costs. These are measurable outcomes that will strengthen families and make communities safer.

I police in a community whose county has more than 17% of our population below the poverty level.

Police officers all over this state would tell you this and personally in my nearly 25 years in law enforcement it has become common place to see generation after generation of the same family become criminals.

We have come to expect that children of criminals will do no better than their parents. Fortunately we can stop this cycle.

We can reduce child abuse and neglect, we can reduce crime, and we can increase school readiness with the NFP program.

In law enforcement, we know that if we stop the cycle of abuse, it reduces crime, makes our citizens safer, and we have less victims.

I believe that home visiting also improves a child's chances in education. There is a clear and undeniable connection between education and crime. We see it on our streets every day. Our prisons and jails are full of people who did poorly in school.

Because a child is born into a family with low-resources, or into a socially disadvantaged environment, we can and—in the interest of public safety we must—provide programs that help that family, help that child, and make our streets safer.

Nurse Family Partnership is a proven program that gets results. That is why I am urging you today to restore \$2.5 million for the sustainability of the NFP home visiting program.

I thank you for your time and your consideration.

ⁱ The original findings were presented in Olds, D.L., Eckenrode, J., Henderson, C.R., Kitzman, J.H., Powers, J., Cole, R., et al. (1997). Long-term effects of home visitation on maternal life course and child abuse and neglect: Fifteen-year follow-up of a randomized trial. *JAMA*, 278(8), 637-643; Revised results in: Luckey, D.W., Olds, D.L., Zhang, W., Henderson, C., Knudtson, M., Eckenrode, J., et al. "Revised analysis of 15-Year Outcomes in the Elmira Trial of the Nurse-Family Partnership." Prevention Research Center for Family and Child Health, University of Colorado Department of Pediatrics, 2008.

ⁱⁱ Eckenrode, J., Campa, M., Luckey, D.W., Henderson, C.R., Cole, R., et al. (2010). Long-term effects of prenatal and infancy nurse home visitation on the life course of youths: 19-year follow-up of a randomized trial. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 164(1), 9-15; Luckey, D.W., Olds, D.L., Zhang, W., Henderson, C., Knudtson, M., Eckenrode, J., et al. "Revised analysis of 15-Year Outcomes in the Elmira Trial of the Nurse-Family Partnership." Prevention Research Center for Family and Child Health, University of Colorado Department of Pediatrics, 2008.

