



Florida Sheriffs Association Positioning on Continued Funding of Healthy Families Florida

Florida Sheriffs realize the importance of crime prevention. Sheriffs know the crime of child abuse affects vulnerable children in horrible ways and that is why the best and smartest way to address child maltreatment is to prevent it before it ever happens.

Healthy Families Florida helps prevent child abuse in Florida's highest-risk families. Healthy Families is a nationally accredited home visiting program that spares children from the trauma of abuse, reduces a significant burden upon the law enforcement community, and saves Florida taxpayers many millions of dollars.

Child abuse is a human tragedy with dire consequences not only for the innocent children who needlessly suffer, but also for every member of the community.

The most recent annual Healthy Families Florida performance report shows 98% of children in families served were free from abuse both during and 12 months following services. Prevention, especially when it comes to the crime of child abuse, is a vital dimension of public safety policy.

For a fraction of the cost of serving victims after abuse, Healthy Families Florida provides services for an annual cost of \$1,625 per child. According to conservative estimates, Florida pays \$64,377 a year per victim for child welfare services, hospitalization, special education and juvenile justice costs associated with child abuse.

While the \$10 million dollar budget cut Healthy Families sustained in 2010-2011 was not restored in 2011-2012, the 2011 Florida Legislature maintained level funding for Healthy Families at \$18.1 recognizing the value of the program.

To save children's lives and taxpayer dollars, Florida Sheriffs support the continued funding of Healthy Families Florida for FY2012-2013 at \$18.1 million.

