



Protecting, Leading and Uniting...since 1893

FLORIDA SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION

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TO: ALL FLORIDA LEGISLATORS

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

We all know that 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. According to conservative estimates, Florida pays more than **\$64,000 a year per victim** for child welfare services, hospitalization, special education and juvenile justice costs associated with child abuse.

Healthy Families Florida prevents child abuse in Florida's highest-risk families for less than **\$1,700 a year per child**, a fraction of the cost of serving victims after abuse occurs. This nationally accredited home visiting program spares children from the trauma of abuse, reduces a significant burden upon the law enforcement community, and saves Florida taxpayers many millions of dollars.

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. Despite the program's proven results, economic pressures resulted in a \$10 million dollar cut to Healthy Families during the 2010 Legislative session. This nearly 36% decrease in program funding resulted in the elimination of services in 12 counties and a significant reduction in the number of families served in the remaining 55 counties. In total, 3,900 high-risk families and their 5,800 children lost critical prevention services.

Prevention, especially when it comes to the crime of child abuse, is a vital dimension of public safety policy. Please join us in advocating to maintain funding for Healthy Families Florida at the current level of \$18.1 million. Savings children's lives and saving dollars; two priorities which we can all agree are vital to the quality of life in Florida.

Sincerely,

Sheriff J. Harrell Reid
President
Florida Sheriffs Association

JHR/mm

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"Florida's Charity for Florida's Children"
www.youthranches.org

FLORIDA SHERIFFS YOUTH RANCHES, INC.



Florida Sheriffs TEEN DRIVER PROGRAM

Sheriffs teaching teen driver safety



1122 PROGRAM

Florida contact for Saving money for State and local Government Agencies



EXPLORERS PROGRAM

Law enforcement training for teens