Grays Harbor Kitsap and Mason County Law Enforcement Leaders Join National Child Abuse Prevention Campaign

Local News

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160 Washington law enforcement leaders join national colleagues on letter speaking out about abuse/neglect fatalities; Report shows half of child abuse and neglect can be prevented though voluntary home-visiting. Seattle, WA - As millions of Americans recognized National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April, one hundred and sixty law enforcement leaders from across Washington, including six from Kitsap and Mason Counties, joined a nationwide letter calling on Congress to support proven child abuse prevention strategies.At least 6,500 Washington children suffered abuse or neglect in 2010—nearly 18 children every day and 125 every week, on average. Child abuse and neglect also claimed the lives of at least 1,560 children nationwide in 2010, including 12 Washington children. More than 1,560 law enforcement leaders and survivors—one for every child who lost their life to abuse or neglect—have signed the letter urging Congress to protect and expand funding for evidence-based home visiting services (see a list of all Washington law enforcement leaders who signed the letter).Grays Harbor, Kitsap, and Mason, County law enforcement leaders who signed the letter are:H. Steward Menefee, Grays Harbor Prosecuting Attorney
Mike Whelan, Sheriff Grays Harbor CountySheriff Steve Boyer, Kitsap County
Chief Michael Evans, Squaxin Island Tribal Police
Chief Jon Fehlman, Bainbridge Island
Chief Craig Rogers, Bremerton
Sheriff Casey Salisbury, Mason County
Chief Alan Townsend, Port OrchardThe letter emphasized the benefits of voluntary home visiting services, which help new parents cope with the stresses of raising a young child. Research shows quality, voluntary home visiting programs can cut child abuse and neglect by up to 50 percent, significantly reduce later crime and save taxpayers money. They say that evidence-based home visiting can save as much as $21,000 for each family served by reducing abuse, neglect, juvenile crime and other negative outcomes. Washington recently received a multi-year, $25 million dollar federal grant to expand home visiting services statewide. And the 2012 supplemental budget signed by Governor Gregoire includes nearly $1 million dollars per year in state general funds for home visiting.The signatories, members of the anti-crime organization Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, pointed to hundreds of thousands of cases of abuse or neglect that occur every year and said that the scope of the problem should “shock the conscience of every American.”“From a fiscal, moral and public safety perspective, we have an obligation to invest in home visiting and protect children from the harm caused by abuse and neglect,” the leaders agreed.

1,560 Signers: One for Every Child Who Died from Abuse or NeglectFIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS is proud to announce the support of over 1,560 of our members for this open letter to Congress, urging policymakers to address the pressing need to reduce child abuse and neglect and support funding for voluntary home visiting. Find out who signed the letter in your state. DOWNLOAD THE LETTER.

To All Members of the United States Congress: The problem of child abuse and neglect

continues to plague our nation. In 2010, there were nearly 700,000 confirmed victims of abuse or neglect nationwide, including 1,560 children who were killed as a result. The true number is actually significantly higher, since many incidents are never reported. Almost 80 percent of children who died from maltreatment in 2010 were under age 3 and almost half never reached their first birthday.**These numbers should shock the conscience of every American, including all members of Congress.**Child abuse and neglect also increases future crime. Survivors of abuse or neglect often carry emotional scars for life, and research has shown they are almost 30 percent more likely to be arrested for a violent crime. The cycle of abuse can also continue, with evidence suggesting that an estimated one third of adults with a history of abuse may harm their own children.Research shows that investing in high-quality programs proven to prevent child abuse has a powerful impact on reducing later crime. The more than 5,000 law enforcement leaders and crime survivors of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS nationwide know from the front lines against crime that child abuse is a serious public safety concern. We have launched a yearlong, national campaign to raise awareness of the devastating impact that child abuse and neglect has on our communities, and to draw attention to research-proven approaches to help prevent such tragedies.Voluntary, evidence-based home visiting programs can help break the cycle of abuse and violence. Eligible families can receive these voluntary services to learn more about their child’s health, nutrition and physical, psychological and emotional development. One rigorous study of the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) found that participation in the program cut abuse and neglect among at-risk kids nearly in half. In addition, children of mothers who received NFP coaching had 60 percent fewer arrests by age 15 than children of similar mothers who were not coached. By age 19, children not in NFP had nearly three times as many convictions, concentrated among girls, as children from similar families who were not served.These services also save money. A 2011 study of NFP by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy found NFP produced almost $21,000 in net savings per family served. Unfortunately, throughout the nation, there is still a significant unmet need for these services, which leaves more children at risk for abuse or neglect.Each signature below represents one of us standing up for each of the 1,560 children who died from abuse or neglect in one year, and the hundreds of thousands more who suffer from abuse and neglect every year. We urge you to stand up for public safety by protecting and building upon current investments in voluntary, home visiting programs proven through research to stop the cycle of child abuse and neglect, reduce crime and violence and save money.**America can and must do more to prevent child abuse and neglect. From a fiscal, moral and public safety perspective, we have an obligation to invest in home visiting and protect children from the harm caused by abuse and neglect.**More than 1,560 law enforcement leaders and crime survivors, representing all 50 states, have signed the nationwide letter for child abuse prevention. For your convenience, we have organized the signers by state.

AlabamaAlaskaArizonaArkansasCalifornia*
ColoradoConnecticut DelawareFloridaGeorgia
HawaiiIdahoIllinois*IndianaIowa
KansasKentuckyLouisianaMaine*Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan*MinnesotaMississippiMissouri
Montana*NebraskaNevadaNew Hampshire New Jersey
New MexicoNew York***North Carolina** North DakotaOhio*
OklahomaOregon*Pennsylvania*Rhode IslandSouth Carolina
South DakotaTennesseeTexasUtahVermont
VirginiaWashingtonWest VirginiaWisconsinWyoming*58 Member signatories requested to not be listed publicly.