



April 1, 2022

Dear Members of the Minnesota Legislature,

We are members of [Fight Crime: Invest in Kids](#), a bipartisan, national, nonprofit organization of 5,000 law enforcement leaders—including 150 here in Minnesota—who believe that the best way to stop crime is to invest in evidence-based programs that prevent it.

We write today to urge you to prioritize early childhood funding in the budget this year. These dollars would help ensure that our kids enter school prepared to learn and will enhance public safety in the long run.

We know from our own experiences in law enforcement and from decades of research that high-quality child care and early learning doesn't just prepare kids to succeed in school and life; they also protect public safety. Kids who are given the opportunity in their earliest years to develop and learn in age-appropriate ways are less likely to become involved in the criminal justice system as young adults.

This is in part because high-quality early care and learning helps ensure kids meet school readiness benchmarks at kindergarten entry, thereby reducing the likelihood that they underperform in elementary school and increasing the likelihood they graduate from high school on time. We know the latter metric to be especially important, as six in ten US inmates never graduated high school. Research also highlights how high-quality early childhood programs build the important social-emotional and executive function skills that impact school completion and later behavioral outcomes.

Numerous longitudinal studies support the link between high-quality early education and crime reduction. For example, one recent MIT study of the Boston preschool program found that enrollees were less likely to have been incarcerated in a juvenile facility during high school, compared to non-enrollees. In another study, children not served by the Chicago Child Parent Centers (CPC) early education program were 70 percent more likely to be arrested for a violent crime by age 18. By age 24, those served by the CPC were 20 percent less likely to have served time in jail or prison.

Cost-benefit analyses of early education programs have also demonstrated their positive return on investment, including through savings realized from crime reduction. But Minnesota parents struggle to access and afford any child care - much less high-quality care. And those who do this critical work receive poverty wages - inhibiting their ability to provide children with the enriching care and learning they need.

Our state is at a crossroads. **With a more than \$9 billion budget surplus this year, we are in a unique position to invest in what we prioritize: our children.** When our children are given the foundation they need to succeed, working families will benefit today, and the next generation will see less crime and greater productivity.

Thank you for your commitment to our state's kids and families, especially those who are most vulnerable. There is no better time to invest in our next generation.

Sincerely,

1212 New York Avenue NW / Suite 300 / Washington, DC 20005 / 202.464.7005



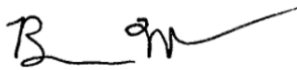
Anthony Palumbo
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James Stuart
Sheriff
Anoka County Sheriff's Office



Laura Eastman
Chief of Police
Bayport Police Department



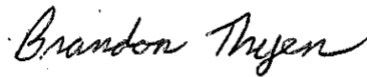
Brian McDonald
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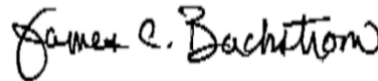
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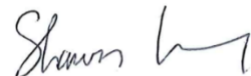
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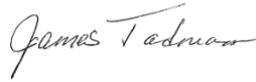
Jeff Stadum
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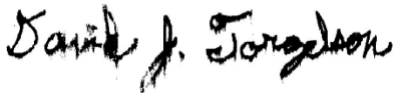
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