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5,000 Police Chiefs, Sheriffs,  
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Leaders, and Violence Survivors  
Preventing Crime and Violence

November 5, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
235 Cannon House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids is a national anti-crime organization of more than 5,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, attorneys general, other law enforcement leaders, and victims of violence who know from the front lines in the fight against crime—and the research—that quality health-related investments in kids are among the most powerful weapons we have in our crime-fighting arsenal. We write to urge you to support H.R. 3962, the “Affordable Health Care for America Act,” which contains several crucial crime-fighting investments that will help make our communities safer:

- (1) **Guaranteed funding for evidence-based home visiting programs (Sec. 1904), as well as language allowing optional Medicaid coverage of evidence-based nurse home visiting (Sec. 1713);**
- (2) **A requirement that states suspend—rather than terminate—Medicaid and CHIP eligibility for incarcerated juveniles, ensuring their access to recidivism-reducing therapies immediately upon their release (Sec. 1726).**

Home Visiting

**We strongly support H.R. 3962’s inclusion of \$750 million over five years in new guaranteed funding for voluntary, evidence-based early childhood home visiting programs, as well as language allowing optional coverage of evidence-based nurse home visiting services under Medicaid.** Evidence-based home visiting is a proven investment that helps improve health outcomes for kids, helps cut child abuse and neglect, and reduces crime.

In 2007, there were 794,000 confirmed cases of child abuse and neglect, and at least 1,760 deaths. Research has shown that children who experience abuse and neglect have a 27 percent higher likelihood of committing violent crime later. The best available research indicates that, based on the confirmed cases of abuse and neglect in just one year, an additional 30,000 children will become violent criminals and 200 will become murderers as a direct result of the abuse and neglect they endured.

Fortunately, evidence-based home visiting programs can help break the cycle of abuse and violence. For example, a study of one home visiting model, the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP), found that participation in the program cut abuse and neglect among at-risk kids nearly in half, and children of mothers who received NFP coaching had 60% fewer arrests by age 15 than the children of mothers who were not coached. A study of another home visiting model, Healthy Families in New York, found that mothers in the program reported committing one-fourth as many acts of serious physical abuse as mothers not receiving

services. Not only do these programs result in less child abuse and neglect and later crime, but they also produce tremendous cost savings: a 2008 study by Steve Aos of the Washington State Institute for Public Policy found that NFP produced \$18,000 in net savings per family served and saved three dollars for every dollar invested. Yet, the unmet need for evidence-based home visiting among at-risk families is substantial. The home visiting provisions in H.R. 3962 would constitute a significant step toward addressing that unmet need.

#### Medicaid Suspension

**Finally, we strongly support H.R. 3962's requirement that states suspend—rather than terminate—Medicaid eligibility for those eligible youth who are incarcerated.** Medicaid enables troubled youth to have access to several proven crime-reduction approaches, including evidence-based family therapeutic interventions like Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST), and Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC). MTFC, for example, has been shown to cut juvenile recidivism in half and saves the public an average of \$89,000 for every juvenile treated.

In some states, juveniles, who are otherwise eligible for Medicaid, are terminated from these programs when they enter confinement. Upon their release from confinement, many juveniles have to wait weeks or months to obtain eligibility as a result of the reapplication process. This delay inhibits their ability to quickly access recidivism-reducing interventions.

By requiring states to suspend—rather than terminate—Medicaid eligibility for incarcerated youth, H.R. 3962 will ensure juveniles get access to these programs during the critical period when it is most important that they get therapeutic interventions: immediately upon their release.

On behalf of law enforcement leaders who have seen too many kids grow up to become criminals, we urge you to support H.R. 3962 and the life-saving and money-saving investments that will help at-risk kids and families nationwide, save taxpayer dollars, and make our communities safer for years to come.

Sincerely,



David S. Kass  
*President*



Miriam Rollin  
*Chief Operating Officer*



Nick Alexander  
*Federal Policy Director*