



*Hundreds of Police Chiefs, Sheriffs, District Attorneys, other Law Enforcement Leaders, and Violence*

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## **Santa Barbara County District Attorney Visits Capitol to Seek Legislative Support for At-Risk Youth**

*Early Education, Juvenile Justice Programs Cited as Top Priority*

SACRAMENTO – Members of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, national anti-crime organization of police chiefs, sheriffs, district attorneys and victim advocates with 400 members in California and close to 5,000 members nationwide, visited the Capitol today to urge legislators and administration officials to support evidence-based programs proven to keep children in school and away from crime.

Santa Barbara County District Attorney **Joyce Dudley** and other Fight Crime: Invest in Kids *California* members participated in individual meetings with over 20 key policymakers and administration officials.

“Getting kids prepared for success in school, and then keeping them in the classroom and on track to graduate are two of the most effective ways to keep our streets and communities safe,” said Fight Crime: Invest in Kids *California* State Director **Brian Lee**. “We’re fortunate to have so many law enforcement leaders and victim advocates as members who recognize this and work to support policies and funding for programs that help keep kids off the streets and away from crime.”

Members of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids *California* called on legislators from both sides of the aisle to increase state funding for programs scientifically proven to steer kids away from crime, such as high-quality early education and dropout prevention strategies that address truancy and chronic absence. It is estimated that a 10-percentage-point increase in high school graduation rates would reduce violent crimes by 20 percent, and could prevent 400 murders and 20,000 aggravated assaults.

Research shows that kids who receive high-quality early education and care are more likely to graduate from high school and less likely to ever become involved in crime. Fight Crime: Invest in Kids *California* members asked lawmakers to support SB 837, a bill authored by Senate President pro Tempore Darrell Steinberg that would make early education available to all 4-year-olds by expanding the state’s transitional kindergarten program.

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids *California* members also asked lawmakers to support AB 1866 (Bocanegra), which would help identify early warning signs for dropout by tracking school attendance in CALPADS, the state’s longitudinal student data system. California is one of just four states that does not track individualized school attendance.

For kids already involved in the juvenile justice system, intensive family therapies, such as Functional Family Therapy (FFT) and Multisystemic Therapy (MST), have been shown to cut re-arrests by as much as 50 percent. The Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction (MIOCR) program used to support these

evidenced-based therapy programs, yet funding for the program was eliminated several years ago. Members of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids *California* encouraged policymakers to support SB 1054 (Steinberg) which would restore the MIOCR program and provide \$50 million for MIOCR grants, evenly divided between juveniles and adults.

To review Fight Crime: Invest in Kids *California*'s complete 2014 legislative agenda, or to arrange an interview with a member, please contact [Meghan Moroney](#) at [415-450-1913](tel:415-450-1913).

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