



STATE OF ALABAMA
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February 21, 2017

John M. Tyson, Jr.
Helping Families Initiative
Volunteers of America Southeast
600 Azalea Rd.
Mobile, AL 36609

Dear Mr. Tyson,

Please accept this letter of support endorsing the Helping Families Initiative (HFI). We know all too well that prosecution and incarceration, our traditional efforts at fighting crime, have not been particularly successful in changing bad behavior of young people in trouble with the law. In fact, the opposite is true. When youth become involved in the criminal justice system they are more likely to become adult criminals.

We recognize the importance of prevention as a key factor in fighting youth crime and violence. It is my belief that your success with the HFI holds great promise in the identification and intervention in the lives of troubled youth and their families. HFI organizes the delivery of services to the family unit thus reducing the likelihood that members of those families will be involved in crime.

We also know that school truancy is a key indicator of future trouble. Although we already have laws that require the reporting of truancy to local district attorneys, too often nothing much is done. HFI fills this void by providing timely and accurate data that allows district attorneys to take preventive action.

The investment to take HFI statewide is small when compared to the eventual payoff. There is no doubt that when implemented consistently statewide, Alabama will benefit from a more educated workforce and safer communities. It could be one of the largest economic development projects in the State.

HFI has the potential to unify existing programs and resources across Alabama. Assisting local schools, district attorneys, and community agencies focus on youth crime just makes common sense. HFI is the most efficient use of existing resources to solve these problems.

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District attorneys are structured to fight crime and ensure justice to our citizens. Schools are structured to educate our youth in order for them to reach their full potential as productive citizens. The answer to fighting youth crime involves both of these institutions and requires them to function together in new and productive ways.

Please let me know what we can do to support the Helping Families Initiative. I look forward to working with you on this most important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Marshall", written in a cursive style.

Steven T. Marshall
Attorney General