



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Governor Scott: It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget Provides Critical Investments to Keep Florida Families Safe**

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – Governor Rick Scott today highlighted investments in the It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget that ensures the continued protections of Florida families and visitors to Florida. This Budget provides resources to state and local criminal justice agencies and the judicial branch to ensure the safety and protection of Florida families and visitors through effective investigations, prosecution, and targeted rehabilitation and prevention efforts.

Governor Scott said, "Last year we made strategic investments to keep families safe by giving law enforcement officials the resources they need, and investing in preventative services so we keep at risk youth out of trouble. With recidivism down and the state at a 43 year crime low our efforts to keep families safe are working, and this budget continues to build on that success."

The It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget supports Governor Scott's commitment to keeping Florida families and visitors safe through these investments:

- **Ensuring Safe Prisons:** The It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget provides \$31.3 million to hire 378 correctional officers to fill current vacancies as well as additional positions. An additional \$5.3 million is provided for critical prison facility maintenance and repairs, \$500,000 for prisoner transport vans, and \$23.2 million toward closing the current year operational deficit.
- **Safer Communities through Effective Law Enforcement Crime Solving Tools and Programs and Effective Rehabilitation Efforts that Continue to drive down Florida's Crime Rate:** The It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget invests:
  - \$2.9 million to enhance Florida's Criminal History Database which serves as the central repository for all arrests and criminal history information in Florida;
  - \$1.9 million to complete the upgrade of the Biometric Identification System, which is the central repository for fingerprint records collected at time of arrest and for applicant/employment screening;

- \$3 million in additional funding for the added security of electronic monitoring of inmates on work detail in community work release centers and offenders on community supervision who are on court ordered electronic monitoring;
- \$9.3 million for the opening of the newly built Baker and Everglades Reentry Centers, which provide for targeted rehabilitative programs for inmates within three years of release and;
- \$3.3 million for expanding community based substance abuse treatment beds for drug offenders.

In addition, the Budget supports \$2.5 million for job training and placement for rehabilitated released inmates through Operation New Hope and Ready4Work; and \$400,000 for mental health overlay treatment of persons with serious mental health issues at risk of recidivating and reentering the criminal justice system.

- **Rehabilitation and Reform for Juvenile Justice:** The It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget provides funds to expand effective prevention and treatment programs for youth at risk to engage in criminal activity. This investment includes \$2 million to expand slots in PACE Center for Girls statewide and open a new school in Clay County.

In addition, the Budget supports:

- \$3.4 million to expand the children-in-need/families-in-need counseling services to at-risk youth in rural counties;
  - \$5.5 million for Boys and Girls Clubs to provide delinquency prevention programs to over 18,000 youth at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system; and
  - \$1.5 million for the Big Brothers Big Sisters programs targeting 1,200 at-risk youth who have a parent that is incarcerated.
- **Protecting Vulnerable Children:** The It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget provides \$6 million to increase volunteers to represent dependent children through court proceedings.
  - **Protecting Families from Abuse and Violence:** The Budget supports \$3.5 million for the continued funding of the 26 child advocacy centers statewide that provide coordinated services for abused children.
  - **Recognition and Reward for Law Enforcement:** The Budget supports \$11.1 million for salary adjustments for law enforcement positions within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement as well as sworn law enforcement in the Departments of Agriculture, Business and Professional Regulation, Financial Services, the School for the Deaf and Blind, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, and the Department of Legal Affairs.

**Department of Juvenile Justice Secretary Wansley Walters said,** “Florida’s at-risk children now have more opportunities than ever to change their lives and stay on a path to successful adulthood. With the continued investment in prevention and diversion services, the It’s Your Money Tax Cut Budget funds programs and services that save taxpayers’ dollars by reaching our children early – ensuring they receive the most appropriate services to meet their needs *before* they are in crisis. I thank Governor Scott for his continued support of our priority to transform Florida’s juvenile justice system into one that increases public safety by putting children’s needs first.”

**Department of Corrections Secretary Michael Crews said,** “The Department of Corrections appreciates Governor Scott’s support and his dedication to ensuring the safety of Florida families. His leadership has been vital in securing strategic funding that meets critical needs in corrections while continuing to build upon the momentum of our re-entry efforts that continue to reduce recidivism in our state and strengthen Florida communities.”

**Florida Department of Law Enforcement Commissioner Gerald Bailey said,** “Governor Scott’s Budget enhances the resources we need to keep Floridians safe. Governor Scott understands the needs of law enforcement and we appreciate his commitment.”

**Florida Sheriffs Association President and Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd said,** “We would like to thank Governor Scott for his commitment to providing funding for common sense crime fighting measures. Providing law enforcement with these kinds of resources is critical to making our communities safer.”

**Florida Police Chiefs Association President and Springfield Police Chief Philip Thorne said,** “Police Chiefs across the State of Florida are thankful for the leadership and support of Governor Scott and the Legislature regarding public safety. Restoring crucial training monies to improve law enforcement officer capabilities; expanding drug treatment and mental health services for offenders; and increased electronic monitoring of work release inmates are significant supports to our ability to keep the crime rate at an all time 43 year low. Governor Scott truly wants to help us keep Florida safe for citizens and visitors alike.”

**Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association Executive Director Mark Fontaine said,** “Research shows that substance abuse treatment for offenders result in safer communities, reduced recidivism, and changed lives. The Governor and legislature are applauded for their leadership in making substance abuse treatment a priority.”

**Florida Network of Children and Youth Services Executive Director Stacy Gromatski said,** “We are thrilled that Governor Scott agrees that expanding services to families in crisis is a wise investment. This Budget expands programs that are proven to be effective at keeping families together and preventing juvenile delinquency. The Florida Network and DJJ will be able to provide it’s partners with resources to address the serious physical and mental health needs of the runaway and homeless youth that are residing in local shelters. Services will be provided to families that are in crisis, and

whose children are running away, failing in school and engaging in behaviors that put them and their entire family in danger. Taxpayers can rest assured that these funds will be utilized by organizations that have decades experience and are proven to be effective at preventing delinquency and family destruction. Governor Scott has consistently supported Secretary Wansley Walters in her efforts to make Florida's Juvenile Justice System a national model. We are so grateful for his continued leadership and demonstrated support of Florida's youth and their families. This Budget shows that Florida's leaders believe that every family in Florida deserves the right to raise their children so that they will grow up to reach their full potential."

**Mary Marx, president and CEO, PACE Center for Girls said,** "Through his support of the expansion of the PACE Center for Girls, Governor Scott has demonstrated his commitment to making a difference in the lives of girls and young women across Florida. The 2015 Budget enables PACE to serve more girls and young women and further enhances critical education, training, counseling and advocacy services so girls have the opportunity for a better future. I applaud Governor Scott's commitment to ensuring more girls in Florida have the chance to find their voice and achieve their potential."

**Lucas Boyce, chair, Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention State Advisory Group said,** "Governor Scott is to be commended on continuing the focus and funding on juvenile delinquency intervention and community-based prevention services. Juvenile delinquency is at an all-time low supporting our strategy of dedicating resources at the front-end keeping Florida's youth from ever entering the juvenile justice system. Investing in prevention services further demonstrates Governor Scott's promise to make Florida the best in the nation for children and their families."

**Florida Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs, Daniel Lyons, Executive Director said,** "The Florida Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs appreciates Governor Scott's support of our clubs. Young people across Florida will have greater opportunities to envision a brighter future and receive the foundation they need to reach their full potential."

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