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Opinion

Stopping crime really does start on the homefront

To the Times:

In the fight against increasing violent crime, there is no substitute for tough law enforcement – smart deployments of resources and putting dangerous criminals behind bars. It is becoming increasingly clear, however, that we will never arrest and imprison our way out of the crime problem.

This is why we are pleased to hear that included among the proposals being debated as part of the state budget will be quality pre-kindergarten and in-home parent coaching programs.

These research-based programs are proven to stem the pipeline of future criminals by intercepting at-risk children before they become hard-wired by a culture of crime.

Studies have shown that at-risk children who did not attend quality pre-K were five times more likely to be chronic lawbreakers when they grow up than the children who attended.

Research also shows that children who are abused are twice as likely to become offenders later in life. That's why in-home parent coaching programs like the Nurse Family Partnership, which has been shown to prevent as many as half of all cases of abuse or neglect among at-risk families, are an important state investment.

As law enforcement, we do our part to bring criminals to justice. It's time the politicians in Harrisburg do their part to implement a comprehensive plan that not only allocates adequate resources to law enforcement today, but also invests in at-risk children to help eliminate the next generation of criminals.

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