



State Attorney

ANDREW H. WARREN

Thirteenth Judicial Circuit

419 N. Pierce Street

Tampa, Florida 33602-4022

(813) 272-5400

January 31, 2018

Remarks from State Attorney Andrew Warren on the Adult Pre-Arrest Diversion Program

I am a passionate believer in criminal justice reform. Criminal justice reform encompasses many different policies, but at its heart, it is about an idea—the idea that we, especially prosecutors, need to focus more on the long-term consequences of what we do every day in the system. How do we make our community safer in the long-run? How do we reduce recidivism in the long-run? What is the long-term impact of conviction and incarceration on a person, a family, a community? Achieving these goals requires taking different approaches to different types of offenders and crimes. We must be tough on those who pose the greatest threat to our community: violent criminals, fraudsters, and serial recidivists. But we need smart alternatives to prison for many first-time, non-violent, and juvenile offenders. This program—the Adult Pre-Arrest Diversion Program (“APAD”)—is exactly the type of smart policy we need.

Every day, multiple adults walk into our courthouse for their first brush with the criminal justice system, having been arrested and charged with petty theft, misdemeanor marijuana possession, or some other low-level offense. The APAD program will hold these people accountable and assess sanctions that fit the crime and address the underlying behavior without the traditional and expensive process of arrest, prosecution, and conviction. We are effectively putting people on probation without the arrest and conviction that burdens them for life, making it harder for them to get or keep a job, and harder for them to resume being law-abiding, contributing members of our society. Not only will the APAD program make us safer, it will save money.

I want to thank my partners: Sheriff Chronister, Public Defender Holt, Clerk of the Court Frank, Chief Judge Ficarrotta and the Administrative Office of the Courts, and our five area Police Chiefs. Last summer, we launched the greatly expanded and now permanent juvenile civil citation program. In the months leading up to the launch, all of us were working hard to create that program while simultaneously discussing a similar civil citation program for adults. That became the APAD pilot, which started last summer. I want to commend Sheriff Chronister for his leadership for, in only a matter of months, expanding the pilot and making it operational throughout the county with all our other law enforcement partners.

Hillsborough County had been behind the curve in criminal justice. But we are quickly moving to the forefront of the evolution of our criminal justice system with initiatives like our disarming domestic

abusers and adult and juvenile civil citation programs. Today, once again, you see what is possible when political labels give way to meaningful and effective criminal justice reform. While it is easy to become frustrated and disillusioned with the partisan bickering that plagues Washington, Hillsborough's citizens can be proud and inspired by the work that we are doing, together, to build a better, smarter criminal justice system. I am proud to stand with these partners, and we will continue doing this hard work because it is effective, it is fair, and it builds a safer, stronger community.