



# 2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

## PACE CENTER FOR GIRLS, INC.

Over the past 32 years, PACE Center for Girls has transformed the lives of more than 40,000 at-risk girls providing them with opportunities for a brighter future through trauma-informed education, counseling, training and advocacy. With 20 PACE Centers located across Florida, PACE is a vocal and respected advocate for girls with histories of trauma, mental health challenges, family conflict, and academic instability, factors that place girls at risk for delinquency.

Involvement in the juvenile justice system has a significant impact on the future success of girls and imposes tremendous long-term costs to society<sup>1</sup>. Since inception, PACE has partnered with the Florida Legislature and the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice to provide a holistic program model that marries educational and academic preparation with delinquency prevention and early intervention services, to divert girls from the juvenile justice and child welfare systems and ensure success at home, in school and in their communities.

By investing in prevention and early intervention, girls avoid the delinquency system, escape sexual exploitation, and break generational cycles of poverty and long-term economic dependence. Further, the safety of our society and the returns to taxpayers are significantly enhanced.



### During the 2018 Legislative Session PACE Center for Girls will advocate for:

PACE Center for Girls, Inc. advocates for legislation that develops comprehensive systems of care for girls at risk of delinquency, dependency or sexual exploitation; provides access to comprehensive wrap-around services, including mental health; and removes barriers to education and employment for girls.

#### Comprehensive Systems of Care

- PACE Center for Girls supports legislation to reduce the number of Human Trafficking victims, and provide resources to survivors of sex trafficking. Such legislation includes prevention of sex trafficking, increasing penalties for buyers and sellers of commercial sex and creating a civil cause of action for victims of human trafficking.
- Support the equal application of juvenile civil citations and advocate that the practice of civil citation be adopted and consistently implemented across all counties.
- Support efforts to significantly decrease the practice of direct filing of children into the adult corrections system<sup>2</sup>.

#### Education

- Support education reform giving girls the option to utilize alternative high school graduation requirements, and receive a high school diploma without meeting current high stakes testing requirements.
- Support an increase in per pupil FEP funding for students in grades K-12 and ensure all categorical funds follow the student regardless of school placement.
- Ensure legislative intent is followed by school districts by providing funding, rather than goods or services, to all juvenile justice education programs through the DJJ supplemental in the education funding formula. Include annual adjustments to the DJJ supplemental that align with increases to the base student allocation for public school funding.

#### Resources

- Maintain level of funding and services provided in FY 2017-18.



[www.pacecenter.org](http://www.pacecenter.org)

<sup>1</sup> The Quarterly Journal of Economics, Juvenile Incarceration, Human Capital and Future Crime: Evidence from Randomly Assigned Judges, 2015. <sup>2</sup> "Branded for Life: Florida's Prosecution of Children as Adults under its 'Direct File' Statute." Human Rights Watch, 10 April 2014.