



First 100 Days

Report to the Community

Andrew H. Warren
State Attorney
Thirteenth Judicial Circuit

A Message from the State Attorney



Dear friends,

When I was sworn-in as your State Attorney on January 3, 2017, my mission was clear: to make Hillsborough County safer while promoting justice and fairness for everyone. We are committed to making our neighborhoods safer for you and your families. We are finding smart alternatives to prison for first-time, non-violent, and juvenile offenders to more efficiently use your tax-dollars and reduce recidivism. And we will be proactively engaged with the community to reduce crime and rebuild trust.

I am striving to make our State Attorney's Office the model of what a prosecutor's office should be—not just in Florida, but across the entire country. Yes, it's ambitious, but high expectations yield high results. I'm privileged to work alongside more than 300 dedicated public servants, including 130 assistant state attorneys, as well as a talented group of investigators, victim advocates, and support staff. From day one, I have challenged them to consider the long-term consequences of what we do every day in the criminal justice system: to appreciate what happens after we close a file; to engage with those we serve so that our entire community recognizes that we are partners; and to view each case not as a person to be prosecuted but as a problem to be solved. That is my vision for this office. But our work together is not just about my vision. It's not about what I believe; it is about what we believe: our shared commitment to justice, fairness, and integrity.

Day by day, we are doing our part to form a more perfect union by striving to promote justice here in our community. I am pleased to share with you this report on our first 100 days, highlighting the changes we have made and the steps we have taken towards fulfilling our mission. I'm excited about the progress that we have already made and even more excited for our journey ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A. Warren". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping tail.

Andrew H. Warren

LISTENING TO OUR PARTNERS



Building a safer community while promoting justice and fairness requires one thing in abundance: listening. We must hear everyone's voice to respond to the unique needs of our community. That's why our first priority was to embark on a 60-day Listening Tour, meeting with the stakeholders in our criminal justice system to discuss necessary changes and how best to address the challenges ahead. We met with community leaders, law enforcement agencies, judges and court personnel, criminal defense attorneys, public defenders, and third party agencies, like the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay, that work closely with the State Attorney's Office. The constructive conversations generated feedback on issues ranging from charging decisions and plea negotiations to diversion programs and operational efficiencies. You spoke, and we listened. The invaluable feedback has been integral in our development of plans to improve internal operations, resource allocation, policy initiatives, community engagement, and training. We continue to work zealously to put these plans into action and look forward to more dialogue on these important issues.

FOSTERING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY

The cornerstone of any public institution is trust. Building that trust requires transparency and candid dialogue. As a candidate, I promised to regularly engage with the community to increase transparency regarding the policies we implement and the decisions we make, and to give the community a platform to raise issues and share ideas. Our engagement with the community instills both confidence and legitimacy in the work we perform. I have kept my promise. In March, we held the first of our office's quarterly Community Workshops, which was open to the



public and streamed live on our Facebook page. At the Workshop, I shared updates about policy initiatives and answered questions from those in attendance. If you missed it, we hope to see you at the next Community Workshop scheduled for June 13th in Wimauma. **Building trust also requires civic involvement and community service outside of the courthouse.** We have teamed up with our law enforcement partners and other government agencies to improve public safety through organizations like Safe & Sound Hillsborough. We are working with organizations like Moms Demand Action Against Gun Violence and Mothers Against Drunk Driving to raise awareness and keep our neighborhoods safe. We joined USF's N.I.T.E. at its annual Take Back the Night event to support victims of sexual assault. And we have proudly participated in community events such as TOBA's Martin Luther King, Jr. Leadership Breakfast, Plant City's Strawberry Festival, and Tampa's Pride Parade.

CREATING THE INTERNAL FRAMEWORK



There is no substitute for enlisting others in a shared vision for the future. We restructured the office and strategically hired key personnel to carry out the vision and mission of the office. Our newly-created Chief of Policy and Communication oversees policy initiatives, communication, and community outreach. Likewise, our new Chief of Staff oversees the complex administration of a 300-person office and handles legislative affairs to make sure that our community's needs are heard in Tallahassee. We realigned the office to incentivize hard work, critical thinking, and

problem-solving. We elevated the Problem Solving Courts, which consist of the Drug Court, Veterans Court, and the brand new Mental Health Court. To make sure that we are operating efficiently with your tax dollars, we put our internal processes under a microscope, evaluating everything from case intake and preparation, to how discovery is obtained and produced, to working with victims and training for ASAs. Increased efficiency translates to increased public safety.

IMPLEMENTING SMART POLICIES THAT PROMOTE PUBLIC SAFETY

To best safeguard our neighborhoods, we must allocate resources effectively and implement smart policies that increase public safety. In my first few weeks in office, we declined to prosecute members of Food Not Bombs of Tampa Bay for feeding the homeless in a park. Prosecuting people for charitable work does not further our mission and would have been an inefficient use of our resources. We partnered

with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office on an undercover sting operation that resulted in the seizure of 66 firearms and the arrests of dozens of people. We worked with local law enforcement agencies to review their Use of Deadly Force Policies to ensure they promoted best practices such as prohibiting shooting at moving vehicles, rendering first aid, and proportional responses. We also worked with our Chief Judge and other partners to establish the Mental Health Court, which will steer our community members who suffer from mental illness towards treatment and away from conviction and incarceration, thereby saving tax dollars and reducing recidivism. To improve juvenile justice, we have taken action to reduce the number of "direct files"—juveniles who are charged as adults, and we are working to expand the pilot program for civil citations for misdemeanor marijuana possession and make it permanent policy throughout the county. We have formed new partnerships and applied for grants to increase our resources to fund important initiatives. Lastly, we have been active with the Florida Legislature: meeting with elected officials to discuss criminal justice issues, supporting legislation that would improve our justice system, and opposing legislation like the proposed Stand Your Ground bill that would make our communities less safe by making it more difficult to prosecute violent crime.



LOOKING AHEAD

We have accomplished a lot during our first 100 days, but we are just getting started. From enhancing public safety and improving juvenile justice to expanding diversion programs and increasing community engagement, we have set ambitious goals. There will be many challenges ahead, but we welcome these challenges as opportunities to fulfill our mission: to make our community safer while promoting fairness and justice. We look forward to sharing our progress with you.

