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Joint Board Matter with Supervisor Lusk

Request to Designate April 2024 as Child Abuse Prevention Month

Members of the Board,

April is a time to recognize the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse. Fairfax County's child abuse prevention efforts seek to build stronger families that can provide safe and healthy childhoods that lead to creating a strong and thriving community. This year's theme is *Family Matters*. We recognize the importance of families in the formation of children's character, and that spending time together as a family develops loving relationships.

In FY 2022, nearly 3.1 million children were involved with Child Protective Services across the country. In FY 2023, more than 52,000 children in the Commonwealth of Virginia and approximately 3,700 children in Fairfax County were reported as possible victims of abuse or neglect. Additionally, Fairfax County's Child Protective Services' 24-hour hotline received approximately 13,100 calls in FY 2023 for protective services and information about prevention and family support services.

Child abuse prevention is a community responsibility and finding solutions depends on involvement among all people. The lives of our children can be positively changed and saved by active and aware community members making a critically important decision to ask more

questions and offer help. Adverse childhood experiences result in long-term health impacts. Fortunately, the trauma of child abuse and neglect is preventable.

Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, nurturing, and stable environment. Fairfax County is dedicated to the safety of children and providing the appropriate support to parents to keep families healthy. We encourage residents, community agencies, faith groups, and businesses to renew their commitment to preventing child abuse, supporting families, and promoting safety, family resilience, and child well-being.

Without objection, we move that the Board designate April 2024 as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Fairfax County and present a proclamation to the Fairfax County Department of Family Services at its meeting on March 19, 2024.