

## Promoting Civil Citations as an Alternative to Youth Arrest (2017)

- WHEREAS, Currently, section 985.12 of Florida Statutes, provides that law enforcement officers may issue a civil citation to juveniles for certain violations of law or arrest juveniles for those violations; and
- WHEREAS, The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) civil citation initiative addresses a youth's behavior at his or her first encounter with the juvenile justice system and provides an alternative to arrest for that child; and
- WHEREAS, Civil citation is vital to efforts to reform the juvenile justice system by giving first-time misdemeanor offenders the opportunity to participate in intervention services at the earliest stage of delinquency; and
- WHEREAS, Rather than arresting a youth who is involved in common misbehavior, the Juvenile Citation Program offers counseling, education and other appropriate community interventions; and
- WHEREAS, To participate in the program, the youth must take responsibility for the offense and is required to complete community service hours and other sanctions that may include letters of apology, and payment of restitution to the victim; and
- WHEREAS, Research shows that Florida counties that have implemented juvenile citation programs have had significant reduction in juvenile arrests and referrals to the juvenile justice system; and
- WHEREAS, The cost of a youth completing the civil citation program is, on average, less than half the cost of arrest and detention, resulting in millions of taxpayer dollars being saved; and
- WHEREAS, Efficiently utilizing civil citation diversion programs as an alternative to arrest has been shown to be effective in preventing youth from having a criminal record, reducing recidivism rates, and keeping youth in school and on track to graduate; now, therefore, be it
- RESOLVED, That Florida PTA and its constituent associations support and advocate in favor of policies that increase and standardize the utilization of youth civil citations as an alternative to arrest in every county across the state; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That Florida PTA and its constituent associations educate community stakeholders as to the benefits of utilizing civil citations as an alternative to arrest; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That Florida PTA and its constituent associations encourage government and community organizations to provide quality programs, services and resources to positively redirect and support youth who have been issued civil citations.