

**DHS Social Worker Appropriation
Bill Signing 021703**

- Acknowledge legislators in crowd.
- I am signing this bill today because we must put our children first.
- This bill will provide additional funds to hire social workers. Our social workers are among the most dedicated employees. They work hard every day to protect our children. Their job is difficult under the best conditions.
- There are two challenges to solving the shortage of social workers:
 - We have met the first challenge with this appropriation bill and the Legislatures commitment to stable funding for social workers.
 - The second challenge is in recruiting dedicated people to this demanding job.
- The best tool for recruitment is to give the agencies the flexibility to hire and place workers where the demand is the greatest. We must also have the flexibility to make starting pay competitive.
- We should pay our social workers more. Theirs is not a 9 to 5 job. These men and women don't leave their concerns for the children they protect at the office.
- They are on call 24 hours a day 7 days a week. They deserve our full support. The children they protect deserve our full support.
- We brought attention to this issue last year by finding \$1 million.
- Thank the groups that helped bring this critical issue to the legislature's attention – the coast group speaks with a loud voice. By their actions, children, not only on the coast but also across the state, will be helped.
- Working together, we will protect our children.