



Department of Justice

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<http://www.justice.gov/usao/ohs>

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“WE PROSECUTE, YOU PROTECT”

Information available about the efforts to combat child exploitation

COLUMBUS – Carter M. Stewart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, today announced additional resources available to law enforcement, parents, teachers and communities in the 48 counties of the district as part of the U.S. Department of Justice’s National Strategy for Child Exploitation Prevention and Interdiction that was announced by U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder today in Washington. Stewart has posted the additional information on the office’s website, www.justice.gov/usao/ohs. It is in the Special Initiatives section of the website under the heading “Project Safe Childhood.”

“Since October 1, 2009, the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Southern Ohio has worked with more than 35 law enforcement agencies to charge 40 defendants with crimes that include exploiting children through producing, sharing or possessing child pornography, enticing minors to meet them for sexual purposes, or failing to register as a sexual offender as required by federal law,” Stewart said. “We will continue to expand the partnerships we’ve established and want to involve others who hold the key to preventing the exploitation of children.”

Stewart and the Assistant U.S. Attorneys who prosecute cases of child exploitation have developed a document titled “*We Prosecute, You Protect: The Basics of What Every Parent Should Know to Protect Children from Predators*.” The document, available for free to download from the office’s public website, explains how technology such as social networking websites, smart phones and instant messaging programs make children vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. It also spells out the various federal laws and the punishments provided under the laws.

The document also contains steps parents and caregivers can take to protect children online. “As parents prepare to send their children back to school this fall, I want to encourage them to supply their children not only with books and pencils, but with knowledge on how to guard against the dangers that are out there,” Stewart said.

In addition to the downloadable document, Stewart has posted links to other resources for parents including the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (www.ncmec.org) and Project Safe Childhood (www.psc.gov), the effort by all 94 U.S. Attorney’s Offices to marshal federal, state and local resources to prevent and interdict child exploitation. Stewart also provides a link for schools, PTA’s, church groups or civic associations to use to contact the office and arrange for a presentation.

Stewart highlighted the work by federal, state and local law enforcement agencies including:

* The **FBI Cybercrimes Task Force** based in Columbus with officers from the Westerville, Dublin, Upper Arlington, Reynoldsburg and Powell police departments and the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCI).

* U.S. **Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE)**, who works to investigate trafficking of child pornography, especially images from overseas,

* The **U.S. Marshals Service** which has the lead authority to investigate cases involving sex offenders who fail to register as required by the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA), which is part of the Adam Walsh Act passed by Congress in 2006. As part of the overall strategy, the U.S. Marshals Service is launching a nationwide operation targeting the top 500 most dangerous, non-compliant sex offenders in the nation.

* The **U.S. Postal Inspection Service**, which has developed and coordinated nationwide investigations targeting the production, distribution, receipt and possession of child pornography.

* **Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray's Office**, which has designated an Assistant Attorney General as a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney to prosecute child exploitation cases.

Stewart also recognized other law enforcement agencies who regularly work with the office in prosecuting cases of crimes against children. Those agencies include the sheriff's offices in Belmont, Butler, Clark, Clermont, Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Knox and Warren counties, county prosecutors in Butler, Clark, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery and Warren counties, the Xenia Law Director's office, police departments in Blue Ash, Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton, Galion, Lebanon, Springfield, West Chester and Xenia, the Miami Valley Computer Forensics Laboratory, the Ohio Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, and the Care House of Dayton Child Advocacy Center.

Stewart acknowledged the work by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Christy Muncy in Cincinnati, Michael Hunter in Columbus, and Dayton Branch Manager Laura Clemmens who focus on prosecuting cases of child exploitation.

The national strategy provides the first ever comprehensive threat assessment of the dangers facing children from child pornography, online enticement, child sex tourism, commercial sexual exploitation, and sexual exploitation in Indian Country, and outlines a blueprint to strengthen the fight against these crimes. The strategy builds upon the department's accomplishments in combating child exploitation by establishing specific, aggressive goals and priorities and increasing cooperation and collaboration at all levels of government and the private sector.

The strategy first analyzed the threat to our nation's children and described the current efforts at all levels of the government against this threat. Since FY 2006, the Department of Justice has filed 8,464 Project Safe Childhood (PSC) cases against 8,637 defendants. These cases include prosecutions of online enticement of children to engage in sexual activity, interstate transportation of children to engage in sexual activity, production, distribution and possession of child pornography, and other offenses.

As part of its public outreach efforts, the department today re-launched ProjectSafeChildhood.gov, the Project Safe Childhood (PSC) public website. PSC is a department initiative launched in 2006 that aims to combat the proliferation of technology-facilitated sexual exploitation crimes against children. Led by U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, PSC marshals federal, state, tribal and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims.