

TESTIMONY OF
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for the

UNITED STATES CONGRESS
COMMITTEE ON THE HOUSE JUDICIARY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SURVEILLANCE
A Voice for the Voiceless - CSAM Identification

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Chairman Biggs, Ranking Member Jackson-Lee, and distinguished members of Congress, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on: **A Voice for the Voiceless - CSAM Identification**. Having dedicated the majority of my career to investigating crimes against children, it is truly an honor to be here today and to advocate for resources for the men and women in law enforcement who are still on the front lines. That is the very purpose for which Raven was created: through the collective experience of its members, to educate and advocate at the highest levels of government for the resources necessary for our Internet Crimes Against Children task forces to give attention to those who are not heard and a voice to those who cannot speak. Raven's mission statement is to "Transform the Nation's Response to Child Exploitation" and today it is my hope that the opportunity to increase law enforcement's response is seized.

The Internet Crimes Against Children task force is a nationwide DOJ program that has supported state and local agencies with funding, training, and investigative tools since 1998. The ICAC program is authorized through the PROTECT OUR CHILDREN REAUTHORIZATION ACT and remains an impactful force in the fight against child exploitation. The ICAC Task Force program successfully unifies the jurisdictions of nearly 5,500 agencies with 11,600 investigators, examiners, prosecutors, and educators, covering the entire United States.

As a detective with the Gainesville Florida Police Department, I had the privilege of being part of the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force program for 12 years as an investigator, a forensic examiner, and the last ten years as a task force commander. Through that capacity I was privileged to have the opportunity to co-create a statewide annual training conference, plan and execute nearly 50 multi-agency undercover operations, eight CSAM categorization operations, two victim identification operations in partnership with Homeland Security, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and Interpol, and implement a multi-year effort to adopt an overall victim-centric approach in CSAM investigations through training and funding support.

Victim Identification is central to all investigations and for most cases where a child has a connection to the offender, that relationship and identity is discovered within that investigation. The problem arises when CSAM images and videos are shared between offenders who did not create them and had no connection to the victim depicted. In those situations, the government becomes the listed victim, and for a variety of reasons it is often that no further effort is taken to

identify the children in the pictures. Outside of individual state and local agencies, HSI and FBI maintain victim identification units and support requests for victim identification assistance. I have personally interacted on numerous occasions with the HERO CORPS staff of Homeland Security's Computer Crimes Center, Victim ID Lab. I encourage you to endorse the HERO CORPS program.

Since 2002, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has acted as the national clearinghouse, maintaining a database of known and unknown exploited children with one hundred analysts assigned to identifying victims at different stages of media review. The Child Victim Identification Program is a critical piece of the US domestic effort, maintaining a repository of the most horrific images and videos beyond what you can imagine. Through the ICAC Investigative and Operational Standards all ICAC task forces and affiliates are required to submit their CSAM files to NCMEC's Child Victim Identification Program. This, in turn, allows NCMEC's CVIP analysts to continuously compare incoming information against unsolved cases in a central location. Unfortunately, the process is cumbersome and dated. This is why I ask that you support the REPORT ACT and COSMA so that necessary authority can be given to allow for online, and immediate, submission of CSAM material for review and action.

I am going to bring your attention to another group: The victims we know exist yet unable to discover without additional funding to support long-term staffing and support. Already in 2024, ICAC investigative tools have observed over 85,000 unique IP addresses in the US associated with users offering to share known child sexual abuse material, but only 367 have been claimed as under investigation. A single torrent (or file group) readily available for download contains thousands of images and hundreds of videos of nothing but toddlers being raped. Law enforcement is increasingly struggling to keep up with CyberTipline reports which leaves proactive efforts suffering as a consequence.

Proactive CSAM investigations have historically had a very high arrest and conviction rate and are often associated with the discovery and safeguarding of live victims, either from discovery of new material or new clues related to previously seen material. Another reality is that not all of the victims we encounter during media investigations were ever photographed. Their perpetrators use known CSAM for inspiration, normalization, and grooming, but these children are victims of equally horrific abuse. The correlation between CSAM possession and hands-on offending is not controversial, concluded by several studies over the past 20 years. I ask you to endorse PROTECT OUR CHILDREN REAUTHORIZATION ACT and fund the MEC budget at 160 million dollars with fenced off language to ensure that both ICAC and NCMEC get their full authorized amount.

If you ask me why you should do more, a former task force commander from Arizona once phrased his motivation like this: After being asked why he would focus on child crimes when he could earn the same or more in a different bureau, he answered: because they believe in Santa Claus.

There's an innocence that's worth fighting for, a response worth funding. If as a society we are unmoved by the legality or unimpressed by the financial burden of inaction, and dispassionate unless we experience a personal impact, I ask you: When did this happen? Is that really who we

are? Take a second and consider a child that is personal to you, a son, a daughter, a niece, or a nephew. That is how personal this is to every single victim and their families. Thank you.