

Good afternoon, Chairman Hawley, Ranking Member Durbin, and distinguished Senators of this Committee. Thank you for the invitation and opportunity to testify today.

My name is Greg Schiller, and I am the CEO of the Child Rescue Coalition. The Child Rescue Coalition is a nonprofit organization that rescues children from sexual abuse by building technology for law enforcement, free of charge, to identify, arrest and prosecute child predators. Headquartered in Boca Raton, Florida, we developed powerful technology, which has been a significant tool for law enforcement agencies around the globe; now utilized in 106 countries. Our technology has improved the success rates of investigators and policing operations in the ongoing pursuit to identify, apprehend and convict individuals and networks associated with child sexual exploitation.

I have the honor of leading an incredible team of technologists, programmers and developers, being supported by a dedicated board of directors, all of whom have the same goal, one mission: to end child exploitation around the world.

Prior to my recent beginning with the Child Rescue Coalition, I was a career prosecutor for more than 21 years – in fact it is the only other job I have had since law school. First as a State Attorney in Palm Beach County, Florida, for 12 years and then as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Southern District of Florida for the past 9 years, I have specialized in prosecuting violations of online child exploitation and human trafficking – convicting more than 350 online offenders during that time. But no matter how many predators I have acquired lengthy prison sentences for, more and more children are being victimized online.

In the safest of our homes across the United States, parents do everything to protect their families: locking their doors, video surveillance, and security systems. Our state and local police fueled by the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Forces and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), the U.S. Marshals (USMS) and other federal agencies do everything within their power and budgets to protect our children. But despite all of this, more and more children are falling victim to online predators every day. Two things must be done – one reactive and one proactive.

First, as this body is well aware and aims to do, we must continue to pass legislation that will protect victims of online sexual abuse. Congress has provided us tools through violations primarily listed in Chapters 110 and 117 of the United States Criminal Code related to enticement of minors; production, advertising, transmission, distribution, receipt and possession of child sexual abuse material (CSAM); and, related offenses of sextortion and live streaming. But, all too often the most devious offenders find new ways to use the internet and technology to exploit our children. We are reacting to the ever-changing landscape, plugging new holes as they develop – gaps the STOP CSAM Act aims to fill.

But secondly and just as importantly, we must proactively educate our children on the inherent dangers of the internet, social media, apps and online gaming. As the Greek philosopher Socrates famously noted, “you don’t know what you don’t know.” And frankly, our children have no idea how dangerous their world is. Never before in the history of mankind has a place existed where children and adults can engage in a space without any supervision or protection. The internet, apps and online games provide that space. But it is not our children’s fault, because they don’t know what they don’t know. And although parents try their best to protect their children, there is not one amongst us over the age of 30 that knows what it is like to be a child with a smart phone and communicating through apps. The social and emotional pressures are so immense, that children are afraid to tell their parents when they are being harmed online for fear of losing that single device that was the gateway of their problems. We must do more. That is why for years I and the Child Rescue Coalition have partnered with NCMEC to teach tens of thousands of children and parents about the dangers they face. Yet there are only so many prosecutors and police who can talk from their experiences and are brave enough to face a room of 8<sup>th</sup> graders. It’s no easy task.

The internet was created without the thought of child protection. It has grown by exponential bounds. Our government, law enforcement, and the citizens of this country are trying to play catchup. We have been playing catchup for more than 40 years since the ARPANET (the precursor to the internet) was born. It seems like every day that a new app or a new variety of child exploitation comes online.

For example, I recently prosecuted a network of child exploiters who were using the darkweb. They created, ran, and brought together thousands of members to exchange sinister, painful and evil CSAM. Those individuals received decades upon decades in prison, and one received life in prison. But what safeguards are there for a child who finds their way onto the darkweb? None.

Or the case of Robert Solove who in 2021 created CSAM of an 18-month-old child in his care in his Boca Raton home and shared the images through an app to other individuals – including, an undercover HSI agent. The child was thankfully rescued by HSI and the Palm Beach County Sheriff's office. Solove also developed an online relationship with a 13-year-old girl in a different state. He directed her to produce CSAM images and videos of herself and send them to him through a different app. If that wasn't enough, he collected CSAM of other children from several internet platforms and stored them on his cellphone. While prosecuting this case, I obtained a sentence of 50 years' imprisonment for Solove. But I also, petitioned the Court to appoint a guardian ad litem for each of his child victims, hire an expert to calculate restitution, and was able to obtain an order of restitution totaling \$1.3 million.

I would be remiss if I did not remind this body that for each of these monsters who prey on our children, there are police officers and federal agents who put their lives on the line every single day to protect these vulnerable victims. They push the limits of their sanity as they converse with predators online in chat rooms. They put their safety in jeopardy every time they execute search warrants to find evidence and arrest predators. Some, as we know far too well in South Florida, pay the ultimate sacrifice, when just 49 months ago two FBI agents, both of whom I knew and worked with, were murdered and 3 more were severely injured, while executing a CSAM search warrant in my District.

Whether it is social media apps like Snapchat or Instagram, or online games, our children are being lured by enticers, online CSAM producers, and sextortionists to encrypted applications to commit their crimes and turn children against their families in some instances. As a prosecutor I fought to take down predators, one at a time, protecting victims one at a time. Now as the CEO of the Child Rescue Coalition, we aim to help law enforcement around the globe proactively fight against online child exploitation, stop child sexual abuse, and aid in rescuing our children.

The STOP CSAM Act (STOP CSAM) provides so many needed stopgaps that federal prosecutors will be able to utilize in combatting child exploitation and protecting victims. A few examples. The amendment to Title 18 U.S.C. Sec. 3509(m) has previously hindered our ability to work with the victims of CSAM in their civil pursuits. As currently written, the law gives the victims the right to review their images in law enforcement custody during “any criminal proceeding.” This has been interpreted as when the criminal charges are filed until the judgement is entered at sentencing. In most cases, victims are not notified of their images in a criminal prosecution until just before or even after sentencing – when restitution is being sought on their behalf. STOP CSAM extends that time of review to give victims and their civil attorneys the time and opportunity to more appropriately pursue civil remedies against the criminal defendants.

STOP CSAM creates a much-needed appropriation to the Judiciary for the Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) program in Title 18 U.S.C. Sec. 3509(h). Many times, our victims are violated by their parents or caregivers or need their own advocate – this will give the Courts the necessary funding to provide a GAL for those victims. Similarly, STOP CSAM provides structure and funding for the Judiciary to appoint trustees to manage victim restitution for minors, incapacitated victims, and foreign-born victims in online exploitation and other related crimes. With live-streaming cases rising to never-seen before levels, this will give us the tools to protect both American and foreign child victims.

STOP CSAM will allow restitution for identifiable minors in obscenity cases – which is a continuing growing problem with AI assisted-generated CSAM.

STOP CSAM will require tech platforms to provide more information to NCMEC within a specific period. Too often, by the time the information reaches law enforcement and prosecutors, the offender has obfuscated their account or even moved from the residence they committed the act from, impeding law enforcement’s ability to act on the violation. STOP CSAM mandates a common-sense reporting requirement to tech platforms – so that law enforcement can protect our children. STOP CSAM will hold them accountable, including criminal liability on tech platforms who intentionally host or store, or knowingly promote or facilitate, online exploitation of a child,

putting the onus on tech platforms to report their user's activities immediately. That is parallel to the related criminal statutes I prosecuted.

From my experience and perspective as a former Assistant United States Attorney, I pray that this body has the courage to say no more to the exploitation of children, place stopgaps where they are needed in the laws that exist to protect our children, give law enforcement the tools they need to fight back against CSAM, while at the same time encouraging schools, parents and community organizations to educate our children regarding the dangers of the Internet.

On behalf of the Child Rescue Coalition, I thank you all for the opportunity to be here today.