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## **ILLINOIS FIREFIGHTER PLEADS GUILTY TO CHILD EXPLOITATION CHARGES**

WASHINGTON – A Rochester, Ill., firefighter pleaded guilty today to one count of production of child pornography, one count of possession of child pornography and one count of destruction of evidence, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney for the Central District of Illinois James A. Lewis.

Justin D. Weaver, 26, pleaded guilty before U.S. Magistrate Judge Byron G. Cudmore in U.S. District Court in Springfield, Ill. During the plea hearing, Weaver admitted to molesting a 7-year-old minor victim and producing child pornography of the molestation. Additionally, Weaver admitted to knowingly possessing images of child pornography, and destroying evidence of his child pornography offenses.

Weaver is scheduled to be sentenced on June 6, 2011. At sentencing, Weaver will face a minimum mandatory sentence of 15 years in prison and a maximum sentence of 60 years in prison, a fine of up to \$750,000 and a lifetime term of supervised release. Weaver will be required to register as a sex offender in accordance with state and federal law. Weaver was arrested on May 7, 2009, and remains in custody pending sentencing.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit [www.projectsafchildhood.gov](http://www.projectsafchildhood.gov).

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Elly Peirson of the Central District of Illinois and Trial Attorney Mi Yung Park of the Criminal Division's CEOS. The case was investigated by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the Springfield Police Department, the Adams County Sheriff's Department, and CEOS's High Technology Investigative Unit.

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