

# Department of Justice

United States Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr.  
Western District of New York

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## **HENRIETTA MINISTER PLEADS GUILTY TO VICTIMIZING A CHILD**

ROCHESTER, N.Y.-- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Joe N. Flowers, Jr., 42, of Henrietta, N.Y., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge David G. Larimer, to transporting a minor with the intent to engage in criminal sexual activity. The charge carries a mandatory minimum penalty of five years in prison and a maximum of 30 years, a fine of \$250,000 or both.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Marisa J. Miller, who is handling the case, stated that the defendant, a minister, transported a minor from Rochester, N.Y. to Orlando, FL with the intent of engaging in criminal sexual activity. Specifically, in June 2004, Flowers drove a child, who was then younger than 15 years old, to Florida to visit an amusement park. While in Florida, the defendant engaged in sexual activity with the child, in violation of state law.

"As a minister, this defendant not only abused a child, he also abused his position of trust," said U.S. Attorney Hochul. "Our Office will vigorously prosecute any individual who victimizes a child, including members of the clergy and others in positions of power."

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 United States 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 plea is the culmination of an investigation on the part of Special Agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations, under the

direction of Special Agent in Charge James C. Spero and the Monroe County Sheriff's Department, under the direction of Sheriff Patrick O'Flynn.

Sentencing is scheduled for September 6, 2012 at 11:30 a.m. in Rochester, N.Y., before Judge Larimer.

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