



# Department of Justice

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## **DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE RELEASES FIRST NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR CHILD EXPLOITATION PREVENTION AND INTERDICTION**

### ***U.S. Marshals Service to Launch Nationwide Operation Targeting Top 500 Most Dangerous, Non-compliant Sex Offenders***

PITTSBURGH – Following an announcement today by Attorney General Eric Holder, Acting United States Attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania Robert S. Cessar announced that the Department of Justice released its first National Strategy for Child Exploitation Prevention and Interdiction. The strategy provides the first 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 also 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.

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. Additionally, the department will create a national database to allow federal, state, tribal, local and international law enforcement partners to deconflict their cases with each other, engage in undercover operations from a portal facilitated or hosted by the database, share information and intelligence and conduct analysis on dangerous offenders and future threats and trends. The department also created 38 additional Assistant U.S. Attorney positions to devote to child exploitation cases, and over the coming months will work to fill the vacancies and train the new assistants in this specialized area.

“Although we’ve made meaningful progress in protecting children across the country, and although we’ve brought a record number of offenders to justice in recent years, it is time to renew our commitment to this work. It is time to intensify our efforts,” said Attorney General Holder. “This new strategy provides the roadmap necessary to do just that – to streamline our education, prevention and prosecution activities; to improve information sharing and collaboration; and to make the most effective use of limited resources. Together, we are sending an important message – that the U.S. government, and our nation’s Department of Justice, has never been more committed to protecting our children and to bringing offenders to justice.”

“As technology improves and the Internet becomes more vast and accessible, the number of computer-facilitated sexual crimes against children continues to grow,” said Mr. Cessar. “As a father and as United States Attorney, I am deeply committed to protecting our children from online exploitation and abuse. Through the Western Pennsylvania Crimes Against Children Task Force, we will continue to work cooperatively to prosecute and prevent child victimization via the Internet.”

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. In the Western District of Pennsylvania, 206 PSC cases have been filed against 216 defendants.

At a news conference discussing the strategy and its local implementation, Mr. Cessar noted the September 1999 formation of the Western Pennsylvania Crimes Against Children Task Force (CACTF). The CACTF was one of the first of its type in the country to combine the resources of law enforcement, victim’s services, and medical professionals to more effectively prosecute crimes involving the sexual exploitation of children, and to ensure that the unique needs of child victims are met. Since the CACTF was formed, the annual number of successful prosecutions involving the sexual exploitation of children has increased ten-fold.

Federal law enforcement agencies participating in the CACTF include the United States Attorney’s Office; FBI; U.S. Postal Inspection Service; Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement; the U.S. Marshals Service; and the United States Secret Service. Other Task Force members include the Pennsylvania State Police; Pennsylvania Attorney General’s Office; Allegheny County Police; Allegheny County District Attorney’s Office; Allegheny County Children Youth and Families; Allegheny County Juvenile Probation; Allegheny County Sheriff’s Office; Westmoreland County District Attorney’s Office; Armstrong County Children Youth and Families; City of Pittsburgh Police Department; Bethel Park Police Department; Moon Township Police Department; Mt. Lebanon Police Department; McCandless Police Department; Wilksburg Police Department; A Child’s Place at Mercy Hospital; Child Advocacy Center of Children’s Hospital of UPMC; KidsVoice; Pittsburgh Action Against Rape; and the Center for Victims of Violence and Crime.

Mr. Cessar also noted that a Project Safe Childhood Coalition has formed in Erie, Pa., that includes the FBI, ICE, Secret Service, Erie Police Department, Millcreek Police Department, Meadville Police Department, Bradford City Police Department, and District Attorney’s Offices from the following counties: Erie, Crawford, Warren, Venango, McKean, Elk and Forest.

“As part of the National Strategy to Combat Child Exploitation and Interdiction, the U.S. Marshals Service is launching a nationwide operation targeting the top 500 most dangerous, non-compliant sex offenders in the nation,” stated U.S. Marshal Tom Fitzgerald. “In addition, we will continue to aggressively pursue and apprehend fugitive sex offenders and enforce all aspects of the sex offender registries in fulfillment of our Adam Walsh Act obligations.”

“Among the highest priorities within the Pennsylvania State Police is the protection and security of all children in Pennsylvania. Our collaboration with the United States Attorney’s Office specific to technological crimes involving the abuse of children is a significant step toward protecting innocent children,” said Captain Bret K. Waggoner, Director of the Pennsylvania State Police, Special Investigations Division, Bureau of Criminal Investigation. “I am very proud of the outstanding effort the Pennsylvania State Police Computer Crime Unit puts forth on a daily basis to combat this type of child abuse and sincerely appreciative of the mutual effort and cooperation we receive from the United States Attorney’s Office.”

“Those individuals who commit these heinous crimes against the most vulnerable members of our society will be held accountable” said John P. Kelleghan, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Homeland Security Investigations in Philadelphia. “As shown here today, ICE and our law enforcement partners around the world stand vigilant to protect the most vulnerable among us, our children.”

“The FBI considers the investigation and identification of child sexual predators one of its significant priorities, and we have considerable resources dedicated to the protection of children from online exploitation and abuse,” said FBI Special Agent Jeff Killeen.

Robin M. Dagleish, Inspector in Charge of the Pittsburgh Division of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, stated, “The Postal Inspection Service is committed to preventing child sexual exploitation through our partnership with the Western Pennsylvania Crimes Against Children Task Force and the United States Attorney’s Office.”

“We are fully prepared to apply our expertise and resources to support this initiative and to aggressively investigate, identify, and capture those who are involved in these types of crimes,” added Matt LaVigna, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. States Secret Service.

Despite vigorously fighting all aspects of child exploitation, the department recognized that more work remains to be done. To that end, the department’s strategy lays out goals to increase coordination among the nation’s investigators, better train investigators and prosecutors, advance law enforcement’s technological capabilities and enhance research to inform decisions on deterrence, incarceration and monitoring. The strategy also includes a renewed commitment to public awareness and community outreach.

As part of its public outreach efforts, the department today re-launched [ProjectSafeChildhood.gov](http://ProjectSafeChildhood.gov), the Project Safe Childhood 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.

For more information regarding the National Strategy to Combat Child Exploitation, Prevention and Interdiction, please visit: [www.projectsafchildhood.gov/docs/natstrategyreport.pdf](http://www.projectsafchildhood.gov/docs/natstrategyreport.pdf) .