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**PREPARED REMARKS FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL MICHAEL B. MUKASEY
AT THE PROJECT SAFE CHILDHOOD NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Good morning. Thank you.

Although I am just beginning my service as Attorney General, it has not taken me long to understand the great value of Project Safe Childhood.

PSC has been a priority of the Department and I want to reassure you that I am committed to its continued success. The consequences of doing anything else are unacceptable. Simply put, our children need our protection.

The crimes you investigate are not victimless; they are not harmless diversions or simple demonstrations of love, as some have argued. They are terrible crimes that we as a society cannot tolerate.

I would like to take a few minutes to discuss three key factors that will allow Project Safe Childhood to continue to thrive.

First, PSC addresses a compelling and righteous cause. It was created in response to a true public safety threat and that threat continues.

The other day, I had the opportunity to visit our Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section and to meet with dedicated people who are investigating and prosecuting some of these crimes against children.

As a judge I presided over a handful of these cases and therefore understood that there are people who delight in trading images of child sex abuse, and others who seek to lure children for sexual contact. Still, my visit to CEOS was eye-opening.

At that meeting, the team gave me a battle patch—the kind they give to prosecutors in the office after they've tried one of these cases. I was proud to accept that patch. These are difficult cases, the kind that stick with you well after the verdict is in. I want to commend you for bringing these cases and for shining a light on the sort of evil that is exchanged in dark corners of the internet. You earn your battle patch every day of the year.

You will hear Alicia Kozakiewicz tell her story. The horror she endured is surpassed only by her

own incredible courage. There is nothing more I can add to what she will say; nothing that will make a more compelling case for how important your work is. I can only emphasize that we need to keep at it.

Second, PSC will continue to succeed because it is based on a broad and deep partnership. Issues like this one are too tough, and are too great a burden, to be shouldered by just a few. They require all of us to stand together. Our success is dependent on government -- federal, state and local; non-profits like the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children known as Nick-Mic; schools, churches and community centers; businesses like internet service providers; parents; and children themselves.

I want to mention one specific case that illustrates how some of these partnerships work. The case began in Atlanta, where Federal agents investigating another case found numerous images of child pornography on a seized computer. They sent the pictures to NCMEC for help in identifying the victims.

In one explicit picture of a young girl, a Brownie uniform could be seen in the background, draped over a chair. Computer forensics were able to identify enough of the troop number to fix a general location. This and other evidence placed the victims in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota.

Agents called in the Minnesota Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force in St. Paul, and they began canvassing the leaders of all Brownie troops in the area until they were able to identify the first of the victims. Within 48 hours of getting the images, agents had identified 5 victims, ranging from nine to 12 years old, and soon after that they had the suspect in custody.

He was the grandfather of two of the girls, and he had been given custody of them because they previously had been abused by their parents. He had taken dozens of pornographic photos of his granddaughters and their friends in his home.

At trial, one of the victims – sobbing -- explained why she hadn't told anybody about being forced to pose for the pictures: "I was scared. I felt ashamed of what I did, and I didn't want to tell my parents because I didn't want them to feel ashamed of me. And I knew I did something bad—really bad. And I was afraid to tell anybody."

That defendant was found guilty on 26 counts and was sentenced to 750 years in prison. This case succeeded because of across-the-board cooperation between local cops and sheriff's deputies in two states, federal authorities of the Secret Service and ICE, the ICAC task force, two U.S. Attorney's offices, and NCMEC.

Under tough circumstances, across multiple jurisdictions, investigators and prosecutors operated with the same goal: to find and save these girls, and to bring their abuser to justice.

I think that kind of collaboration and quick action is a testament to the coalitions you've

established, as well as to your zeal for this mission. And I think everyone involved in that case deserves our thanks.

That's just one case. All of you here have done a tremendous job of building and sustaining those partnerships, and I congratulate you on that.

Finally, PSC will continue to thrive and continue as long as there is a sense that the effort is heading somewhere. There must be movement forward.

The Department is focused on helping PSC move forward. In the last fiscal year, the FBI opened a total of 2,443 new "innocent images" investigations, a fourteen percent increase over the year before, while ICAC task forces reported more than 2,300 arrests for the year.

More importantly, law enforcement and NCMEC together have identified more than 1200 victims of child pornography crimes, 323 of them this year alone. Those aren't just images—they're real children who we can save.

Since the launch of PSC training in February, more than 200 state and local law enforcement officers have been trained in how to investigate and present a federal child exploitation case, and plans are in place to train nearly 400 more. I want to urge all of you who get the opportunity to take advantage of this training.

With the 13 new ICAC task forces we announced last month, we now have a presence in all 50 states—from Alaska to Maine. That gives us a total of 59 task forces, where we are working with state and local cops to go after internet criminal activity that targets our children.

But beyond these efforts, we need to face up to the nature of the challenge we face, with computer-savvy criminals committed to harming children. We cannot arrest and prosecute our way to a point where all American children are safe. Rather, we need to help young people make good decisions to keep themselves safe in the first instance.

In partnership with the Ad Council and NCMEC, and thanks to tens of millions of dollars of donated air time, we launched a series of television and radio ads to encourage young people to "Think Before You Post."

And today I'm pleased to announce that we have awarded six grants, totaling \$4 million, to raise public awareness of internet safety issues and provide valuable training to adults and kids. These grants will help community groups in California, Washington, Michigan, Vermont and the District of Columbia get the message out, and provide the kind of information people need to protect themselves and their families.

The kind of success I've described does not happen by accident. It happens because law enforcement and others at all levels are talking to each other and working in cooperation. This is a strong, nationwide coalition of the committed—with countless partners dedicated to supporting

each other and pulling together toward our simple goal of making childhood the safe and hopeful time it should be.

Every case we bring makes our net stronger and tighter. Every child we positively identify makes it easier to find more bad guys and easier to charge them. That said, the number of targets is great and our numbers are modest.

The simple fact is that, although we have been successful in prosecuting these criminals, the great majority of them will be back on the streets some day. We must focus on that reality today if we are to protect our children tomorrow.

Project Safe Childhood will not be complete until we answer the question of what else to do with these offenders. Vigilance alone is not feasible – we cannot monitor every web page and every child. Incarceration alone is not practical – we cannot in every case simply throw away the key.

As part of addressing those limits, we are working as quickly as possible to complete the guidelines required under the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act, or SORNA. When fully implemented, these minimum standards for the registration of convicted sex offenders will help our efforts to track these people, and will help us further tighten our net.

I recognize and applaud your commitment to fighting child exploitation. In turn, I want to make my own commitment to you. I want to hear from you about other ways we can work with you as true partners.

Some things in life are more important than who gets the credit. The protection of our children is surely one of those things. We're succeeding here, as we have in so many of our efforts, but only because we are working together. I am proud to share in this work as it leads to more investigations, more prosecutions, more convictions, and most importantly, more rescued children. When we do more of that cooperating we all get the credit.

Thank you.

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