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CALIFORNIA MAN PLEADS GUILTY AND IS SENTENCED TO 7 YEARS IN PRISON FOR CONSPIRACY TO DISTRIBUTE AND RECEIVE CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

WASHINGTON – Paul Schwartz, 49, of Lathrop, Calif., was sentenced today to seven years in prison after pleading guilty to conspiracy to distribute and receive child pornography, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania David J. Hickton, and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Special Agent in Charge John Kelleghan.

Before sentencing, Schwartz pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute and receive child pornography before U.S. District Court Judge Arthur A. Schwab. According to court documents and proceedings, Schwartz and others distributed images and videos of children being sexually abused to other members of an international group that had restricted membership and was formed on a social networking website. Members of the group distributed to one another thousands of sexually explicit images and videos of children, many of which graphically depicted prepubescent, male children, including some infants, being sexually abused and sometimes sodomized or subjected to bondage.

This case was investigated by HSI and the High Technology Investigative Unit of the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS). Assistant U.S. Attorney Craig W. Haller and CEOS Trial Attorney Andrew McCormack prosecuted the case.

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 CEOS, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafefchildhood.gov

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