



Department of Justice

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Eastern District of Texas

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SPURGER MAN SENTENCED FOR SOLICITING SEX FROM A MINOR

Teacher's Aide Gets 10 Years in Online Undercover Operation

BEAUMONT TX – United States Attorney John L. Ratcliffe announced today that a 26-year-old Spurger man has been sentenced for soliciting sex from an underage child in the Eastern District of Texas.

RANDY HUTTO was sentenced to 120 months in federal prison for Coercion and Enticement today by United States District Judge Marcia Crone. Hutto must also serve a term of five years supervised release during which time he is prohibited from having unsupervised contact with children. Hutto was also ordered to register as a sex offender.

According to court documents, Hutto was arrested in October 2006 during a two-week undercover operation conducted by the Texas Attorney General's Cyber Crimes Unit and the Beaumont Police Department. The sting operation yielded the arrests and indictments of three alleged child sex predators in Jefferson County, each of whom allegedly arranged to meet and sexually assault what they believed to be 13-year-old children they had met online. The online profiles were actually those of undercover investigators with the Texas Attorney General's office.

Hutto was arrested on October 17, 2006 after he arrived at a meeting location in Beaumont, allegedly to meet and sexually assault someone he believed would be a 13-year-old male. At the time, Hutto was employed as a teacher's aide for special education at area middle schools. Hutto was indicted by a federal grand jury in Beaumont on November 15, 2006, on one count of coercion and enticement and pleaded guilty to the charges on February 20, 2007.

"The cooperative efforts of law enforcement agencies stopped this child predator in his tracks," said U.S. Attorney Ratcliffe. "Protecting our children from sexual abuse and exploitation remains a priority of the Eastern District of Texas and the Department of Justice."

This case is part of Project Safe Childhood (PSC). In February 2006, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys Offices, 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 identify and rescue victims. For information about Project Safe Childhood, visit www.projectsafchildhood.gov/.

In Texas, investigative assistance in these matters is provided by the Texas Attorney General's Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC). On May 18, 2006, Attorney

General Abbott's Cyber Crimes Unit was awarded a \$300,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention to establish an ICAC Task Force. The Texas Attorney General's ICAC Task Force is one of almost 50 federally funded task forces in the country dedicated to this issue.

Special Assistant United States Attorney Sarah Wannarka is prosecuting this case in conjunction with U.S. Attorney John L. Ratcliffe and Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott.

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