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While there are many important areas of law enforcement that are priorities for our Office, since becoming the U.S. Attorney, I have personally chosen to go back into the trenches and prosecute cases involving the sexual exploitation of children. Protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse is an integral component of our mission at the Justice Department, and our commitment to this mission is unwavering.

By working on these cases and speaking directly to the victims and their family and friends, I have come to understand that sexual exploitation of children is underreported, difficult to detect and persists throughout the world. The minor victims are denied basic rights to dignity and security, and the abuse has a permanent impact on their lives. I have also learned that by bringing to justice and securing long prison sentences for those who exploit children, we are able to begin to restore a sense of security and dignity to those who have been victimized.

Our district has adopted a multi-disciplinary approach to combat child exploitation by having non-governmental agencies involved, as appropriate, during the investigative phase. Our immediate goal is to stabilize our victims, and these organizations are able to provide much needed care and support for the victims. Whenever possible, we utilize trained forensic interviewers with expertise in child abuse to conduct the interviews of the victims to lessen the trauma of the interviewing experience and increase its fact-finding mission. We also try to video-tape the interviews so that the tapes can be utilized throughout much of the criminal process, thus minimizing the exposure of the child victim to the criminal justice system.

By making this area a priority and engaging proactively with our law enforcement and community partners, we have had substantial success in prosecuting offenders who engage in these heinous crimes. For example, in the last two years, we have:

- Brought dignity and justice to more than 16 Haitian boys who were subjected to long-term and repeated abuse by an American director of a Haitian boys' school who threatened to deny his victims food and shelter if they resisted his sexual advances (www.justice.gov/usao/ct/Press2010/20101221.html)

- Prosecuted a Hartford-area man who received a sentence of more than 25 years for his sex trafficking of two 14-year-old girls
(www.justice.gov/usao/ct/Press2011/20110607.html)
- Secured an 85-year prison sentence for a man who sexually abused a number of girls over 25 years, including filming the abuse, and who prostituted a nineteen-year-old mother and repeatedly abused her four-year old child in Nicaragua where he had traveled with a charity organization to rebuild a community
(www.justice.gov/usao/ct/Press2012/20120131-1.html)
- Restored freedom to girls and women who were prostituted by a pimp in Norwalk, Connecticut (www.justice.gov/usao/ct/Press2012/20120127-4.html), and
- Secured a 45-year prison sentence for a victim who was abused and filmed and whose images are among the most prolific in the world.
(www.justice.gov/usao/ct/Press2011/20110531-1.html)

Despite these and other achievements, we know that in the fight against child exploitation and human trafficking, we have more to do. We continue to seek opportunities to engage in training, awareness and dialogue within our community to find best practices so that we can combat trafficking with increased vigor while vigilant to protecting and restoring the dignity of the victims.

On April 12th and 13th, our Office is co-sponsoring with Yale Law School a significant two-day conference that will focus on domestic and global child trafficking. The symposium will feature a series of panels about the efforts of law enforcement agencies and non-governmental organizations to detect, investigate and prosecute domestic and international human trafficking as well as feature a panel discussion about the making of the new film, *Trade of Innocents*. The film stars Dermot Mulroney & Academy Award winner Mira Sorvino. More information about the symposium, click here: (www.law.yale.edu/news/tradeofinnocents.htm)