



Department of Justice

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Attorney General Hails Passage of the Child Protection Act

Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales released the following statement today regarding Congressional passage of H.R. 4472, the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006:

"America's children will be better protected from every parent's worst nightmare - sexual predators - thanks to passage of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006. I applaud both the House and Senate - and in particular the leadership of Chairman Specter in the Senate and Chairman Sensenbrenner in the House - for passing this comprehensive bill, which includes provisions proposed by the Department of Justice. The protection of our Nation's children has been, and will continue to be, one of the Department's highest priorities, and we believe this bill will help us do our job even better."

BACKGROUND

Important measures in the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act include:

- * Providing statutory authorization for one of the Attorney General's major initiatives, Project Safe Childhood, which will be implemented through U.S. Attorney-led, locally designed partnerships of federal, state, and local law enforcement to investigate and prosecute technologically-facilitated crimes against children.

- * Strengthening the national standards for sex offender registration and notification, including:

- Consistent requirements that convicted sex offenders register in the jurisdictions in which they live, work, or go to school, and periodically appear in person before officials of those jurisdictions to verify and update their registration information.

- Longer required registration periods for sex offenders, including registration for at least 25 years or for life for persons convicted of offenses involving sexual abuse or exploitation of children, for rapists, and for recidivists.

- More consistent availability to the public through the Internet of information concerning the identities and locations of sex offenders who are required to register.

- * Enhancing the penalties for various federal violent crimes and sexual offenses against children.

- * Authorizing the Attorney General to make grants to support pilot programs for electronic monitoring of released sex offenders, and to support effective civil commitment programs for mentally disordered or abnormal sex offenders who remain dangerous.

- * Allowing the Attorney General to seek the federal civil commitment of sexually dangerous persons to treatment facilities until such time as they no longer pose a threat to other persons.

- * Including the provisions of what is popularly known as "Masha's Law," to make it clear that adults who were victims of sexual exploitation when they were children can sue both those who initially committed the exploitation and those who perpetuate the exploitation by downloading the images of abuse.

* Enhancing recordkeeping requirements to ensure that minors are not depicted in sexually explicit material.

* Prohibiting the insidious practice engaged in by certain sexually explicit web sites of hiding innocuous terms in the hypertext markup language so that a search for those terms on the Internet yields links to the sexually explicit web sites.

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