



TO: Chairman Jerrold Nadler, Chairwoman Sheila Jackson Lee, and Ranking Members Jim Jordan and Andy Biggs of the House Judiciary Committee and Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security

FROM: Marci Hamilton, Founder & CEO, CHILD USA, and Kathryn Robb, Executive Director, CHILD USA Advocacy

RE: The National Response to Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of Children in Unaddressed Emergencies Act

DATE: December 1, 2021

Dear Chairman Nadler, Chairwoman Lee, and Ranking Members Jordan and Biggs,

Please accept this letter on behalf of CHILD USA, an interdisciplinary think tank dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect, and its sister organization, CHILD USA Advocacy, in support the “National Response to Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of Children in Unaddressed Emergencies Act,” or the Child RESCUE Act. If passed, this legislation will mark a critical step in the nation’s fight against child exploitation and abuse.

The troubling reality is that the very online platforms we use daily to connect with one another and exchange information, are now being used for the production and trafficking of child sexual abuse material (CSAM). While CSAM is viewed and exchanged through various technologies, these images and videos depict *actual* crimes being committed against children. Not only do these images and videos document victims’ exploitation and abuse, but each time a child victim’s image is redistributed, collected, and viewed their abuse is perpetuated and that child is re-victimized.ⁱ

Tragically, the demand for CSAM has reached epidemic proportions in recent years. In 2020, 65.4 million images and video files of CSAM were reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children’s (NCMEC) CyberTipline, the highest number of reports ever received in a single year.ⁱⁱ

Law enforcement’s ability to uncover sexual predators and rescue current child victims is realized through investigations of CyberTipline reports. The need to identify the thousands of child victims that have already been seen in images is bolstered by the research into actively trafficked images of identified victims which suggests that CSAM becomes more violent and sexually explicit over time.ⁱⁱⁱ

Without adequate resources, law enforcement agencies will not be able to effectively respond to the increasing number of CyberTipline reports and other investigative leads, particularly as investigations of these crimes become increasingly complex with the proliferation



of technologies that enable offenders to evade detection by law enforcement. As a result of resource shortages and investigative challenges, hundreds of thousands of child victims remain unidentified and in need of rescue.

Congress must act now to combat the epidemic of child exploitation and abuse by passing the Child RESCUE Act and ensuring that law enforcement agencies have all the information and resources needed to identify and rescue countless children from the grips of their abusers.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions regarding online child sexual exploitation or if we can be of assistance in any way on other child protection issues.

Sincerely,



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ⁱ Bursztein, Elie, Travis Bright, Michelle DeLaune, David M. Eliff, Nick Hsu, Lindsey Olson, John Shehan, Madhukar Thakur, and Kurt Thomas. 2019. *Rethinking the detection of child sexual abuse imagery on the Internet*. Paper presented at The International World Wide Web Conference, San Francisco, CA, USA, May 13–17; pp. 2601–7; Binford, Warren, Janna Giesbrecht-McKee, Joshua L. Savey, and Rachel Schwartz-Gilbert. 2015. Beyond Paroline: Ensuring meaningful remedies for child pornography victims at home and abroad. *Children's Legal Rights Journal* 35: 117–62.

ⁱⁱ *Overview*. (2020). National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. <https://www.missingkids.org/gethelpnow/cybertipline>

ⁱⁱⁱ Canadian Centre for Child Protection (CCCP) 2016. Child sexual abuse images on the internet: A Cybertip.ca analysis. Winnipeg: CCCP. <https://www.protectchildren.ca/en/resources-research/child-sexual-abuse-images-report/>; Seto MC, Buckman C, Dwyer RG & Quayle E 2018. *Production and active trading of child sexual exploitation images depicting identified victims*. Alexandria, VA: National Center for Missing & Exploited Children & Thorn Yin RK 2009. *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.