

Invest in Child Safety Act

In 2008, Congress responded to the proliferation of child sexual abuse online by directing the Department of Justice (DOJ) to combat these heinous crimes. In the decade that followed, however, DOJ failed to:

- Appoint a permanent senior official to spearhead necessary efforts;
- Submit annual monitoring reports to Congress, which are required by law; and
- Request and subsequently spend the funds necessary to combat this scourge, leaving law enforcement agencies uncoordinated, understaffed and underfunded.
- The most recent DOJ budget cuts more than \$60 million for numerous programs to prevent and support victims of child exploitation.

In 2022, tech companies reported more than 32 million instances of sexual abuse material (CSAM) to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, to be processed and delivered to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Law enforcement is overwhelmed by this deluge of material, and without meaningful funding, enforcement and Congressional oversight, countless children will continue to fall victim to abuse. The Invest in Child Safety Act includes more than \$5 billion in mandatory spending to fund, on an ongoing basis, hundreds of additional prosecutors, investigators, therapists and counselors to prevent, detect and treat new cases of abuse, while enabling the government to identify and prosecute criminals who traffic in CSAM.

The Invest in Child Safety Act would:

- Quadruple the number of prosecutors and agents in DOJ's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section from 30 FTEs to 120 FTEs;
- Add 100 new agents and investigators for the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Innocent Images National Initiative, Crimes Against Children Unit, Child Abduction Rapid Deployment Teams, and Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Forces;
- Provides funding for NCMEC to hire 65 additional analysts, engineers, and mental health counselors, as well as a major upgrade to NCMEC's technology platform to enable the organization to more effectively evaluate and process CSAM reports from companies.
- Double funding for the state Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Forces;
- Double funding for the National Criminal Justice Training Center, to administer crucial Internet Crimes Against Children and Missing and Exploited Children training programs;
- Increase funding for evidence-based programs, local governments and non-federal entities to detect, prevent and support victims of child sexual abuse, including school-based mental health services and prevention programs like the Children's Advocacy Centers and the HHS' Street Outreach Program;
- Require tech companies to increase the time that they hold evidence of CSAM, in a secure database, to enable law enforcement agencies to prosecute older cases;
- Establish an Office to Enforce and Protect Against Child Sexual Exploitation, within the Department of Justice, to direct and streamline the federal government's efforts to prevent, investigate and prosecute the scourge of child exploitation;
- Require the Director of the Office to Enforce and Protect Against Child Sexual Exploitation to serve as the National Coordinator for Child Exploitation Prevention and Intervention;
- Require the Office to develop an enforcement and protection strategy; and
- Require the Office to submit annual monitoring reports, subject to mandatory Congressional testimony to ensure timely execution.