

Officer Steve Grubbs Franklin County ICAC Task Force

October 17, 2017

Chairman Manning, Vice Chairman Rezabek, Ranking Member Celebrezze, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 327.

Background

My name is Steve Grubbs and I have been a full time police officer with the Westerville Police Department since 2000. Since August of 2006, I have been investigating computer-related crimes against children. These criminal offenses include, but are not limited to, Attempted Sexual Conduct with Minors, Possession and Distribution of Child Pornography, and Importuning.

I have been a member of the Franklin County Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force since its inception in February of 2009. We have had over 700 arrests for computer-related sex crimes involving children, with numerous convictions at both the state and federal level. Our task force is one of the most productive ICAC task forces in the nation, and we have fulfilled our perpetual duties of educating the public, protecting children, and arresting pedophiles.

The frustrating and disheartening aspects of our unusual mission comes not from the offenders or from the victims, but rather from the court system itself. With online child victimization a crime that is only realistically about 25 years old, many courts don't know how to properly sentence an offender who commits the crime of Importuning. Frankly, the crime is too new for many judges to properly comprehend and discern, and their sentences reflect that.

Examples of Arrests

Ray Hosier was a 41-year-old male who traveled from Solon, Ohio down to Columbus to have sex with who he believed to be a 15-year-old female. Luckily the female was really a Franklin County ICAC Task Force member posing undercover. Hosier traveled two and a half hours after six days of chatting on Instant Messenger with the "female." He even brought his camera down to photograph and videotape the rape of the female child that he was meeting with. Hosier was convicted and sentenced to probation after pleading guilty to Importuning.

John Szewczyk was a 28-year-old male who was a registered sex offender from Crawford County, Ohio. He was a sex offender after a conviction for meeting and impregnating a 14-year-old girl. Just three years after that conviction, Szewczyk was arrested after traveling to have sex with who he believed was a 15-year-old female and her 36-year-old mother. Again, the females were a Franklin County ICAC Task Force member posing undercover online. During his arrest, Szewczyk had brought a 36-pack of condoms and gifts for the teenage "girl," and admitted he would have had sex with her had he not been arrested. Even a previous conviction for a sex-related crime involving a child did not deter Szewczyk, who traveled to meet the female the very same day they started chatting.

And last but not least, Justin Mote was arrested by the Franklin County ICAC Task Force after traveling from Marysville to have sex with who he believed was a 15-year-old female child. Again, the female was a Franklin County ICAC Task Force member posing undercover online. Mote admitted to chatting online with who he believed was a 15-year-old girl and that his intent was to have sexual intercourse with the child. Mote was arrested for Importuning and transported to the Franklin County Jail. While out on bond, the ICAC Task Force received a call from a detective with the Newtown, CT Police Department. Mote had been traveling from Marysville, Ohio to Newtown, Connecticut and, on at least two occasions, had videotaped himself engaging in sexual contact with a 12-year-old female in Newtown.

12 month sentence - over because he was carrying hands on offending
In Conclusion *I am confident that the improving → problem*

While thankful that there are laws in place to help protect children from online victimization, this legislation helps solidify sentencing and mandates tougher punishment. The courts need to impose more serious penalties against sexual predators who knowingly solicit sex from a child. Together we need to protect the most innocent and vulnerable aspect of society—our children.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the privilege of presenting this testimony, and I would be happy to answer any questions.