AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

HONORING OUR COMMITMENT TO RECOVER AND PROTECT MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND THE WORKFORCE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, MARCH 16, 2017

Serial No. 115–9

Printed for the use of the Committee on Education and the Workforce

Available via the World Wide Web: *www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/committee.action?chamber=house&committee=education*
or
Committee address: *http://edworkforce.house.gov*

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

24–583 PDF WASHINGTON : 2017

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Publishing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512–1800; DC area (202) 512–1800
Fax: (202) 512–2104 Mail: Stop IDCC, Washington, DC 20402–0001

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

VIRGINIA FOXX, North Carolina, *Chairwoman*

Joe Wilson, South Carolina
Duncan Hunter, California
David P. Roe, Tennessee
Glenn "GT" Thompson, Pennsylvania
Tim Walberg, Michigan
Brett Guthrie, Kentucky
Todd Rokita, Indiana
Lou Barletta, Pennsylvania
Luke Messer, Indiana
Bradley Byrne, Alabama
David Brat, Virginia
Glenn Grothman, Wisconsin
Steve Russell, Oklahoma
Elise Stefanik, New York
Rick W. Allen, Georgia
Jason Lewis, Minnesota
Francis Rooney, Florida
Paul Mitchell, Michigan
Tom Garrett, Jr., Virginia
Lloyd K. Smucker, Pennsylvania
A. Drew Ferguson, IV, Georgia

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, Virginia
Ranking Member
Susan A. Davis, California
Raúl M. Grijalva, Arizona
Joe Courtney, Connecticut
Marcia L. Fudge, Ohio
Jared Polis, Colorado
Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan, Northern Mariana Islands
Frederica S. Wilson, Florida
Suzanne Bonamici, Oregon
Mark Takano, California
Alma S. Adams, North Carolina
Mark DeSaulnier, California
Donald Norcross, New Jersey
Lisa Blunt Rochester, Delaware
Raja Krishnamoorthi, Illinois
Carol Shea-Porter, New Hampshire
Adriano Espaillat, New York

Brandon Renz, *Staff Director*
Denise Forte, *Minority Staff Director*

C O N T E N T S

	Page
Hearing held on March 16, 2017	1
Statement of Members:	
Bonamici, Hon. Suzanne, a Representative in Congress from the State of Oregon	3
Prepared statement of	4
Foxx, Hon. Virginia, Chairwoman, Committee on Education and the Workforce	1
Prepared statement of	2
Statement of Witnesses:	
Clark, Mr. John F., President and Chief Executive Officer, The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children	6
Prepared statement of	8
Additional Submissions:	
Chairwoman Foxx:	
Slide: Protecting Vulnerable Children	35
Scott, Hon. Robert C. "Bobby", Ranking Member, Committee on Education and the Workforce:	
Prepared statement of	37
Questions submitted for the record by:	
Polis, Hon. Jared, a Representative in Congress from the State of Colorado	42
Roe, Hon. David P., a Representative in Congress from the State of Tennessee	42
Mr. Clark, response to questions submitted for the record	43

HONORING OUR COMMITMENT TO RECOVER AND PROTECT MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN

Thursday, March 16, 2017
House of Representatives
Committee on Education and the Workforce
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Virginia Foxx [chairwoman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Foxx, Roe, Thompson, Walberg, Guthrie, Messer, Stefanik, Allen, Mitchell, Garrett, Courtney, Sablan, Bonamici, Takano, Adams, Norcross, and Espaillat.

Staff Present: Courtney Butcher, Director of Member Services and Coalitions; Amy Raaf Jones, Director of Education and Human Resources Policy; Nancy Locke, Chief Clerk; Dominique McKay, Deputy Press Secretary; James Mullen, Director of Information Technology; Krisann Pearce, General Counsel; Lauren Reddington, Deputy Press Secretary; Mandy Schaumburg, Education Deputy Director and Senior Counsel; Alissa Strawcutter, Deputy Clerk; Leslie Tatum, Professional Staff Member; Sheariah Yousefi, Legislative Assistant; Tylease Alli, Minority Clerk/Intern and Fellow Coordinator; Austin Barbera, Minority Press Assistant; Jacque Chevalier, Minority Deputy Education Policy Director; Mishawn Freeman, Minority Staff Assistant; and Alexander Payne, Minority Education Policy Advisor.

Chairwoman FOXX. A quorum being present, the Committee on Education and the Workforce will come to order. Good morning, and welcome to today's hearing on the commitment we as a Nation have made to recover and protect missing and exploited children.

So much of the work we do on this committee is about creating opportunities for individuals to learn, grow, and achieve success in their lives. Unfortunately, statistics and the nightly news continue to act as shocking reminders that too many children in this country are not thinking about the future. They are thinking about their survival. Last year alone, there were more than 465,000 reports of missing children.

No child should live in fear of being taken from his or her family. No child should live in fear of abuse or exploitation. No child should live in fear of becoming the victim of a heinous crime. No child should live in fear, period.

That is why protecting our most vulnerable children has long been a national priority. In 1984, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, or NCMEC, was created to play a role in that important effort.

Since that time, NCMEC has coordinated and supported State and local efforts to recover children who are missing, and support youth who are victims of violent crimes. The organization works with law enforcement, families, schools, community leaders, and nonprofit organizations, with a shared goal: providing help to children who are in desperate need of protection.

Through a number of initiatives and programs, NCMEC operates a 24-hour hotline and a CyberTipline, maintains a nationwide database on cases of missing children, and provides technical assistance to other recovery and prevention efforts.

The organization also coordinates resources to victims, their families, and the professionals who help them, and it engages in public-private partnerships to assist State, local leaders, and community partners in their efforts.

As President Ronald Reagan said when opening NCMEC in 1984, "No single sector of our Nation can solve the problem of missing and exploited children alone, but by working together, pooling our resources, and building on our strengths, we can accomplish great things."

Today, NCMEC continues the mission articulated by President Reagan more than 30 years ago. In 2016, the Center assisted with approximately 21,000 cases of missing children. Of those cases, 90 percent were endangered runaways, and roughly one in six of those children was a likely victim of child sex trafficking.

Over the years, Congress has worked closely with NCMEC to ensure it has the tools it needs to do its job effectively. We have also worked to ensure taxpayer dollars being used to support the Center's efforts are spent responsibly, and that is the purpose of this hearing; for an update from the organization itself.

Today, we have with us John Clark, president and chief executive officer. Mr. Clark, we are pleased to hear from you about the work NCMEC is doing to help vulnerable children across the country, as well as the challenges you face and improvements that can be made to help NCMEC continue its work. As I stated earlier, your efforts play a critical role in a national commitment to help our most vulnerable children.

In the words of President Reagan, "Together, we can turn the tide on these hateful crimes."

I look forward to continuing to work with you, and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, to do just that.

I now yield to Ms. Bonamici as the ranking member for her opening remarks.

[The statement of Chairwoman Foxx follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Virginia Foxx, Chairwoman, Committee on Education and the Workforce

Good morning, and welcome to today's hearing on the commitment we—as a nation—have made to recover and protect missing and exploited children.

So much of the work we do on this committee is about creating opportunities for individuals to learn, grow, and achieve success in their lives. Unfortunately, statistics and the nightly news continue to act as shocking reminders that too many chil-

dren in this country aren't thinking about the future. They're thinking about their survival. Last year alone, there were more than 465,000 reports of missing children.

No child should live in fear of being taken from his or her family. No child should live in fear of abuse or exploitation. No child should live in fear of becoming the victim of a heinous crime.

No child should live in fear. Period.

That's why protecting our most vulnerable children has long been a national priority. In 1984, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, or NCMEC, was created to play a role in that important effort.

Since that time, NCMEC has coordinated and supported state and local efforts to recover children who are missing and support youth who are victims of violent crimes. The organization works with law enforcement, families, schools, community leaders, and nonprofit organizations with a shared goal—providing help to children who are in desperate need of protection.

Through a number of initiatives and programs, NCMEC operates a 24-hour hotline and a CyberTipline; maintains a nationwide database on cases of missing children; and provides technical assistance to other recovery and prevention efforts. The organization also coordinates resources to victims, their families, and the professionals who help them; and it engages in public-private partnerships to assist state, local leaders, and community partners in their efforts.

As President Ronald Reagan said when opening NCMEC in 1984:

"No single sector of our nation can solve the problem of missing and exploited children alone. But by working together, pooling our resources, and building on our strengths, we can accomplish great things."

Today, NCMEC continues the mission articulated by President Reagan more than 30 years ago. In 2016, the center assisted with approximately 21,000 cases of missing children. Of those cases, 90 percent were endangered runaways, and roughly one in six of those children was a likely victim of child sex trafficking.

Over the years, Congress has worked closely with NCMEC to ensure it has the tools it needs to do its job effectively. We have also worked to ensure taxpayer dollars being used to support the center's efforts are spent responsibly. And that's the purpose of this hearing—for an update from the organization itself. Today, we have with us John Clark, president and chief executive officer of NCMEC.

Mr. Clark, we are pleased to hear from you about the work NCMEC is doing to help vulnerable children across the country, as well as the challenges you face and improvements that can be made to help NCMEC continue its work. As I stated earlier, your efforts play a critical role in a national commitment to help our most vulnerable children.

In the words of President Reagan, "Together, we can turn the tide on these hateful crimes." I look forward to continuing to work with you—and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle—to do just that.I will now yield to Ranking Member Bonamici for her opening remarks.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you, Chair Foxx, for holding this hearing, and thank you, Mr. Clark, for your testimony and your expertise.

Since it was established in 1984, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has been working to reunite missing children with their families and loved ones.

In 2016, the National Center worked on more than 20,500 missing children cases, and in Oregon, currently, there are 65 active missing children cases on NCMEC's website, just in my own home State. These are children who are separated from their families, who have loved ones looking for them and who need to be found.

In fact, just this week, a nine-year-old girl from Gresham, Oregon, went missing overnight. Thankfully, she was located and reunited with her mother after a concerned citizen, who had seen her picture on the local news, recognized her and called the police. The quick distribution of this girl's picture and fast thinking of a neighbor prevented tragedy from occurring. Unfortunately, many other families are not as lucky.

The world can be a dangerous place for our children and our rapidly advancing technologies can make it even more challenging to protect our kids.

Mr. Clark, I applaud the work you and NCMEC have done to not only keep up with technological advances, but to use those advances to better protect children.

I am looking forward to hearing more from you about your CyberTipline initiative to receive tips about online sexual exploitation, the NetSmartz411 program to educate parents about online safety, and the KidSmartz program, to better prepare kids for online risks.

I also want to make sure we address the particular dangers facing minority children and our LGBTQ youth. It is a tragic fact that abductions of minority children are grossly underreported in the media.

In Washington, D.C., alone, 10 children of color have been reported missing since the beginning of March, and only 2 have been found so far. Ten missing children in 2 weeks is unspeakable. The media has been slow to report on these youths. As we know, media reports about missing children are often critical for reuniting kids and families.

Additionally, LGBTQ youth are at an increased risk of homelessness if they do not feel welcome in their homes or their communities. A 2015 study from the Urban Institute told the heartbreaking stories of LGBTQ youth who run away from home and engage in survival sex, the practice of trading sex for money, food, or a place to stay.

We must do everything we can to make sure that we are protecting all children, including our children of color and LGBTQ youth.

I want to close by expressing my gratitude to Chair Foxx and the committee for the bipartisan commitment to extending the authorization of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and maintaining the Center's independent status.

I hope that we can continue to work together to protect all missing and exploited children and reunite them with their families.

Thank you again, Chair Foxx, and I yield back the balance of my time.

[The statement of Ms. Bonamici follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Suzanne Bonamici, a Representative in Congress from the State of Oregon

Thank you, Chair Foxx, for holding this hearing, and thank you, Mr. Clark, for your testimony and expertise.

Since it was established in 1984, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has been working to reunite missing children with their families and loved ones.

In 2016, NCMEC worked on more than 20,500 missing children cases, and in Oregon, currently there are 65 active missing children cases on NCMEC's website. These are children who are separated from their families, who have loved ones looking for them, and who need to be found.

In fact, just this week, a 9 year old girl from Gresham, Oregon, went missing overnight. Thankfully, she was located and reunited with her mother after a concerned citizen, who had seen her picture on the local news, recognized her and called police.

The quick distribution of the girl's picture and fast thinking of a neighbor prevented a tragedy from occurring.

Unfortunately, many other families are not as lucky. The world can be a dangerous place for our children, and our rapidly-advancing technology can make it even more challenging to protect our kids.

Mr. Clark, I applaud the work you and NCMEC have done to not only keep up with technological advances, but to use those advances to better protect children.

I'm looking forward to hearing more from you about your CyberTipline initiative to receive tips about online sexual exploitation, the NetSmartz411 program to educate parents about online safety, and the KidSmartz program to better prepare kids for online risks.

I also want to make sure we address the particular dangers facing minority children and LGBTQ youth.

It is a tragic fact that abductions of minority children are grossly underreported in the media. In Washington, D.C., alone, 10 children of color have been reported missing since the beginning of March, and only two have been found so far.

Ten missing children in two weeks is unspeakable, and the media has been slow to report on these youth. As we know, media reports about missing children are often critical for reuniting kids and families.

Additionally, LGBTQ youth are at an increased risk of homelessness if they do not feel welcome in their homes or communities. A 2015 study from the Urban Institute told the heartbreaking stories of LGBTQ youth who run away from home and engage in "survival sex"—the practice of trading sex for money, food, or a place to stay.

We must do everything we can to make sure that we are protecting all children—including our children of color and LGBTQ youth.

I want to close by expressing my gratitude to Chair Foxx and the Committee for the bipartisan commitment to extending authorization of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and maintaining the Center's independent status.

I hope that we can continue to work together to protect missing and exploited children, and reunite families.

Thank you again, Chair Foxx, and I yield the balance of my time.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Ms. Bonamici. Pursuant to Committee Rule 7(c), all members will be permitted to submit written statements to be included in the permanent hearing record. And without objection, the hearing record will remain open for 14 days to allow such statements and other extraneous material referenced during the hearing to be submitted for the official hearing record.

We now turn to introduction of our distinguished witness. Mr. John Clark serves as the president and chief executive officer of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Prior to this position,Mr. Clark's career spanned 28 years with the U.S. Marshals Service.

I now ask Mr. Clark to raise his right hand.

Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Mr. CLARK. I do.

Chairwoman FOXX. Let the record reflect Mr. Clark answered in the affirmative. Before I recognize you to provide your testimony, let me briefly explain our lighting system. We allow 5 minutes for the witness to provide testimony. When you begin, the light in front of you will turn green. When 1 minute is left, the light will turn yellow. At the 5-minute mark, the light will turn red, and you should wrap up your testimony. Members will each have 5 minutes to ask questions.

Mr. Clark, you are recognized for your testimony.

TESTIMONY OF JOHN F. CLARK, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN

Mr. CLARK. Alright. Well, good morning, Chairwoman Foxx and Congresswoman Bonamici, and members of the committee. I have had the privilege and honor to serve as a president and CEO of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children since December of 2015.

Now, NCMEC, as we sometimes refer to it, was created in 1984 by John and Reve Walsh and other child advocates as a private, nonprofit corporation to help find missing children, reduce child's sexual exploitation, and prevent child victimization.

Like other large nonprofits, NCMEC receives Federal grant and private foundation funding, corporate donations, and private individual donations to enhance our work and engage in building and promoting a coordinated national response to the problem of missing and exploited children.

I am pleased to be here to provide you with insights and updates on NCMEC and the work we have done in the following years since the last reauthorization in 2013.

Many of you are familiar with such and much of the work that NCMEC does, so I thought I'd spend my time talking today about a few key emerging trends and issues that NCMEC has seen and has taken the lead on addressing since our last reauthorization.

The committee has long played a leadership role on the issue of child sex trafficking, and I know it is of particular interest to many of you today. NCMEC works to combat child sex trafficking by assisting with cases of missing children and by operating our CyberTipline.

And additionally, we provide significant support to victims and families by helping them locate community-based resources, and we assist victims' legal teams in their efforts to seek judicial intervention, including restitution.

As you're aware, NCMEC's CyberTipline serves as a central mechanism where the public technology companies can report instances of child sexual exploitation, including reports related to child sex trafficking.

In 2016, NCMEC assisted with approximately 9,000 reports related to child sex trafficking, but we know that represents only a fraction of suspected child sex trafficking victims in this country.

Our handling of child sex trafficking cases has taught us that child sex trafficking is also a missing child issue. We have found that one in six endangered runaways reported to NCMEC in 2016 were likely sex trafficking victims, and of those, 86 percent were in the care of social services or foster care when they went missing.

This group of children, who we refer to as "children missing from care," is an especially vulnerable group, not only for the overwhelming number that can become victims of sex trafficking, but also for other dangers that they would face.

A 2014 law required the States to begin reporting each missing or abducted child in State care to law enforcement and to NCMEC, and since that bill passed, we've spent a lot of time reaching out to social service agencies and local jurisdictions across the country to ensure that these vulnerable children are reported to NCMEC.

From these reports, we continue to see a significant increase in the number of children missing from care. For example, in 2015 to 2016, the number of the cases increased by 89 percent. Through this enhanced reporting, we have also been better able to assist and support the efforts of State and local jurisdictions to locate and return missing children to safe places.

Now the issue of sextortion, you know, many of us are aware of what's called "sexting," but we are seeing now is that sexting often turns out to be something called "sextortion." Sextortion is a relatively new form of sexual exploitation that occurs primarily online where nonphysical forms of coercion are utilized, such as blackmail, to acquire sexual content, such as photos or videos of a child, they may obtain money from the child, or engage in sexual acts with the child.

So report to the CyberTipline is a key way to break the cycle of victimization. One of the largest extortion cases unraveled with one victim, Ashley Reynolds, who was 14 when she was victimized. The family became aware of her online abuse and reported her case to NCMEC, and we made that information available to the FBI.

Investigators uncovered more than 350 additional child victims in 26 States, three Canadian provinces, and the United Kingdom. They identified 106 of the children, and a defendant was sentenced to prison.

As you move towards updating our funding authorization, I would like to thank you for your leadership and ongoing support of our efforts to recover and protect missing and exploited children. We stand ready to provide you with our thoughts on how to better fund our key programs and streamline our work, and serve the public.

Again, I thank you for this opportunity to appear here today. I look forward to your questions.

[The statement of Mr. Clark follows:]

TESTIMONY

of

JOHN F. CLARK

PRESIDENT AND CEO

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN

for the

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

"HONORING OUR COMMITMENT TO RECOVER AND PROTECT MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN"

March 16, 2017

Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member Scott and Members of the Committee, I am pleased to be here on behalf of The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children® (NCMEC).

NCMEC is a private, nonprofit organization founded over 33 years ago that serves as a national resource center and information clearinghouse to help children, families, communities, private industry, law enforcement, victims, and child-serving professionals on issues relating to missing and exploited children. NCMEC works with all of these groups and the public to further our private mission to help find missing children, reduce child sexual exploitation and prevent future victimization.

Like many nonprofit organizations, we were born of a grassroots response to a personal tragedy. In 1981, 6-year-old Adam Walsh was shopping with his mother at a Florida shopping mall when he vanished without a trace. His devastated parents, John and Revé Walsh, had nowhere to turn for help in finding Adam. In 1981, there was no 24-hour missing children hotline, no AMBER Alert program, no national, coordinated response to search for missing children, no mechanism to enter missing children into the FBI's national crime database, and no support for anguished families like the Walshes. Despite their desperate search, ten days after Adam was abducted, he was found murdered more than 100 miles away.

John and Revé Walsh channeled their grief and painful experience in losing Adam and joined forces with other child advocates to create NCMEC in 1984. Since that time, NCMEC has grown tremendously to become the leading national clearinghouse on issues related to missing and

exploited children. With over 325 employees and hundreds of volunteers, we have forged strong partnerships with other nonprofits, members of the public, industry leaders, federal and local government agencies, families and private individuals who help support our mission and honor our commitment to help recover and protect missing and exploited children. NCMEC provides services and programs in five major areas: (1) missing children; (2) child sexual exploitation; (3) education; (4) child safety and prevention; and (5) victim and family support.

Missing Children

NCMEC approaches each case of a missing child on an individual basis to provide coordinated resources, technical assistance, and support to law enforcement and the family of the missing child. NCMEC's approach ensures that unique resources are applied depending on whether a child has been abducted by a family member; has run away from their home or from social services or foster care; is lost or injured; has been missing for an extended period of time; or has been abducted by a non-family member. NCMEC also provides services and support when an unidentified deceased child has been discovered so we can aid in helping provide that child with a name and identity. Our experience working on over 250,000 cases of missing children has taught us that coordinating public and private resources to locate and identify missing children and creating public awareness are essential to finding and reuniting missing children with their families.

Over the past three decades, NCMEC has seen trends in missing child cases evolve, and we have evolved our programs and best practices in response. It has become increasingly apparent that it is essential for the public to receive rapid notice when a child goes missing in their geographical area. As a result, NCMEC continues to proactively expand both our secondary distribution of AMBER Alerts and our unique targeted social media messaging relating to missing children. NCMEC helps ensure that critical, time-sensitive information relating to a missing child and their abductor is broadcast far and wide. This approach has yielded tremendous results, with 868 recoveries of children directly tied to AMBER Alerts and more than 100 recoveries of missing children relating to NCMEC's social media promotion.

Through NCMEC's work in responding to missing children cases, NCMEC has seen a trending increase in missing children with special needs. These children are especially at risk when they become lost because they are often unable to communicate their name and/or address, may seek to hide in small or enclosed spaces or otherwise avoid traditional search measures. The danger to these children is heightened by their frequent attraction to dangerous areas, such as bodies of water and roadways. Because of the unique dangers these children face, and the specific challenges communities and law enforcement have in trying to locate a child with special needs, NCMEC developed specialized search protocols and guidelines for families and law enforcement to utilize when responding to missing children with special needs.

By virtue of our case work with both missing and exploited children cases, NCMEC has also become increasingly aware over the past few years of the increased risk faced by many children who run away, especially children who run away from state care, and who are particularly

vulnerable to dangers including sex trafficking. Last year, one in six runaway children reported to NCMEC were likely sex trafficking victims, and 86% of these children ran away from social services or foster care. To expand our ability to assist children missing from care, NCMEC supported passage of the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act in September 2014. This law requires that states report foster children who go missing or run away from state care to NCMEC, which in turn enables NCMEC to provide coordinated and uniform resources to every missing child, regardless of the circumstances in which they have gone missing.

Child Sexual Exploitation

NCMEC has multiple programs that provide support to families, law enforcement, child victims, and the professionals who serve them on child sexual exploitation cases. NCMEC has three core programs to address the sexual exploitation of children: the CyberTipline, the Child Victim Identification Program, and NetSmartz411. Each of these programs was created to further our mission and to address a specific need that NCMEC recognized as a result of reports we received relating to sexually exploited children. NCMEC uses the information it learns from its CyberTipline reports to identify specific trends in sexual exploitation crimes against children, which in turn helps shape our prevention and safety messaging and materials. As these trends evolve, so too do our resources, programs and data-driven educational materials.

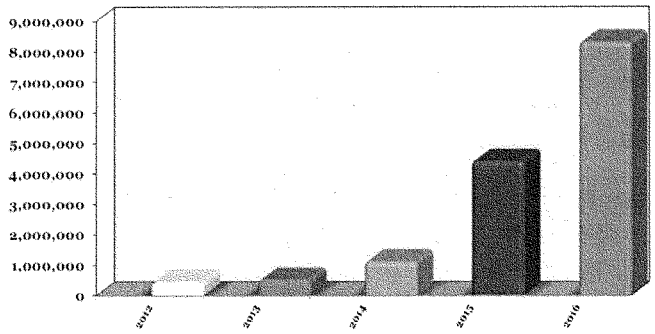
CyberTipline®

As the Internet expanded in the early 1990s, NCMEC began to receive more reports relating to the online sexual exploitation of children. In an effort to efficiently and effectively facilitate our receipt of this information, NCMEC, aided by a private, in-kind donation, launched the CyberTipline in 1998. The CyberTipline serves as the national clearinghouse for tips and leads relating to child sexual exploitation and furthers NCMEC's private mission by providing members of the public and electronic service providers (ESPs) with an efficient method to report incidents of suspected child sexual exploitation, including child pornography, molestation, child sex tourism, online enticement, and child sex trafficking. After NCMEC began operating the CyberTipline, federal law (18 U.S.C. § 2258A) was enacted to require ESPs to report instances of apparent child pornography that they become aware of on their systems to NCMEC's CyberTipline.

As part of our work to prevent the further victimization of children and to discover trends that can assist in reducing these crimes, NCMEC staff review information an ESP voluntarily includes in a CyberTipline report and uses conventional and publicly available information to try to identify a potential geographic location that relates to the subject of the report. After NCMEC's review is complete, the report is made available to a law enforcement agency in the potential location for independent review. NCMEC constantly triages CyberTipline reports it receives to ensure that reports of children who appear to be in imminent danger get first priority.

By operating the CyberTipline, NCMEC serves as a vital and central clearinghouse to further the public-private partnership between the public, ESPs, and law enforcement to help reduce the proliferation of online child sexual exploitation and prevent future victimization. Since its creation, the CyberTipline has received more than 18 million reports relating to incidents of child pornography, child sex tourism, child sex trafficking, child sexual molestation, misleading domain names, words or images, online enticement, or unsolicited obscene material sent to a child. The number of reports received through the CyberTipline continues to increase exponentially each year. So far in 2017, NCMEC has received more than 2.3 million CyberTipline reports.

CyberTipline Activity



Reflects CyberTipline Reports received January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2016.

The exponential increase in child pornography reports to NCMEC's CyberTipline is due, in part, to the international nature of the crime, but also to the common use of the Internet by offenders to facilitate sharing of illegal child sexual abuse images around the world. Once content is distributed online, it is impossible to eradicate all copies, and its continual distribution leads to a constant increase in reports.

NCMEC knows that child pornography presents a serious and growing threat to the children of this nation. Through our work, we have seen the lifelong psychological, financial, and social harms to child pornography victims that extend far beyond the actual harm inflicted on these children. The continued dissemination of these illegal images violates and exploits its many victims. Because of this, NCMEC works with leading members of the Internet industry to help facilitate and provide voluntary initiatives that can help to deter and prevent the proliferation of online child sexual exploitation images. Many Internet companies voluntarily take proactive steps to limit access to child pornography on the Internet by using private technology and tools, such as

PhotoDNA, and sharing best practices in a combined effort to eradicate the further dissemination of these images in order to prevent further harm and suffering by child pornography victims.

Child Victim Identification Program®

Many child pornography victims are unidentified and therefore may continue to be at risk. NCMEC operates the Child Victim Identification Program (CVIP) to help identify unknown child victims so law enforcement can rescue them from abusive and harmful situations. CVIP serves as the central U.S. repository for information relating to child victims depicted in sexually exploitive images and videos. CVIP also assists in the identification of child victims depicted in sexually exploitative images and provides information relevant to judicial proceedings relating to child pornography crimes. By helping to determine which children pictured in sexually explicit images and videos remain unidentified, CVIP aids in preventing future victimization by helping law enforcement focus their efforts on identifying and recovering these children who might still be in abusive situations.

Since CVIP was established in 2002, NCMEC has reviewed nearly 200 million images and videos of child sexual abuse. As with NCMEC's CyberTipline program, NCMEC's private partnerships with technology companies provide the tools and expertise that enable our small staff to triage and screen huge volumes of content and to facilitate the identification and recovery of children.

CVIP also plays a central role in assisting private attorneys representing child pornography victims. NCMEC assists these attorneys in their work to obtain restitution and redress the harm created by those who possess the illegal images depicting their abuse. NCMEC provides information related to identified victims depicted in specified series at their attorney's request to assist in litigation and other advocacy efforts.

NetSmartz411

NCMEC utilizes the expertise and awareness it gains by operating the CyberTipline program to offer informational resources to parents and guardians through its NetSmartz411 program. This program is designed as a forum for parents and guardians to obtain basic information relating to Internet safety, computers, and the Internet, as well as ask specific questions relating to their child's online activities.

Educational Programs

NCMEC provides educational programs and technical assistance and resources at no cost to law enforcement, health care professionals and other child-serving professionals who deal with cases of missing and exploited children. NCMEC's role as a clearinghouse enables us to have access to tremendous volumes of analytical information regarding the missing and exploited child cases that we work on. It has been a priority for NCMEC to reach larger audiences with the statistics, analyses, and best practices that we develop through widespread educational programs. Our

programs are specialized by subject matter, including missing children, forensic imaging, and child sex trafficking, and directed to specific audiences, including police chiefs, healthcare professionals, and prosecutors.

NCMEC offers its educational programs through traditional classroom trainings at its headquarters and branch offices as well as throughout the country and as distance learning programs through NCMEC University Online. To date, NCMEC has provided its educational programming to child-serving professionals to more than 330,000 individuals throughout the United States.

Outreach & Prevention

NCMEC strives to transform the analytical information it gleans from its handling of hundreds of thousands of missing and abducted child cases and its hundreds of millions of exploited child cases into audience-appropriate safety and prevention messaging. We realize the importance of not just working to help resolve cases after a child has gone missing or is being exploited, but also to using our knowledge to break that cycle and prevent these crimes whenever possible. As a result, the message of prevention is ingrained in our private mission, and it is clear to all of us at NCMEC that one of the first steps in protecting children is educating not only children, but also their families, teachers and communities about safety risks. To address this key priority, NCMEC continually expands our safety and prevention programs, particularly in response to new and developing trends we see unfold in our missing and exploited case work. NCMEC's main education programs are the NetSmartz® Workshop, a variety of interactive, educational safety resources for children ages five to 17, and KidSmartz®, a child safety program that educates families about preventing abduction and empowers kids in grades K-5 to practice safer behaviors.

NetSmartz provides age-appropriate games, cartoons, videos, worksheets, safety pledges, and grade-specific handouts and teaching curriculums, to prepare children to be safer online. As we have witnessed the increased vulnerability of children online to certain crimes, we have finetuned our educational programs and messaging relating to more recent dangers, such as sextortion, sexting, cyberbullying, and revealing too much personal information. Our safety programs are created to enable parents and educators to easily select particular aspects of the NetSmartz materials to share with children depending on time constraints and the child's age.

We also incorporate the NetSmartz messaging into teacher curriculums and related teaching materials that are free and downloadable to educational professions.

KidSmartz capitalizes on our private-public partnerships and offers abduction prevention and safety lessons to children in grades K-5 and is a resource for teachers and parents/guardians to help children understand safety risks, learn about self-protection and feel empowered to report attempted abductions or other threatening behavior they may encounter on or offline. Because NCMEC's data indicates that approximately one third of attempted abductions occur to children between 10 and 14 years old who are traveling to or from school or a school-related activity,

programs like KidSmartz are crucial to targeting school-age children and their parents, guardians, and teachers for prevention education.

NCMEC is always seeking new ways to expand its prevention messaging to those who have the most contact with children. For example, one of NCMEC's newest initiatives, Safety Central, is an online mobile app launched last year. Safety Central is designed to provide parents and guardians with a secure online platform to create a Child ID kit for their children as well as to provide current information regarding missing children and safety messaging.

Family & Victim Services

In addition to the case management and analytical support NCMEC provides, we also offer support to families whose child may be missing or a victim of sex trafficking or another form of sexual exploitation. These services are facilitated by NCMEC's master-level trained mental health and child welfare professionals. NCMEC manages voluntary initiatives to expand the resources available to help families, including the Family Advocacy Outreach Network and Team HOPE. The Family Advocacy Outreach Network is a referral system of treatment professionals experienced in treating child victims of sexual abuse or abduction from across the country. NCMEC works to recruit, train, and support these professionals who work with NCMEC to provide ongoing crisis management and therapy, including in-person intervention, to families and recovered victims on a sliding fee or pro-bono basis.

NCMEC also supports families through trained volunteers as a part of Team HOPE, a volunteer group of parents and family members who have experienced a missing or sexually exploited child or who have a child who is still missing and who provide peer support to other families.

NCMEC directly provides reunification assistance when a child is recovered and families need crucial assistance in reintegrating the child back into the home. In addition to emotional support, NCMEC supports the physical reunification of recovered children and their families by working with private transportation partners to facilitate free domestic travel for reunification. We also administer the Victim Reunification Travel Program funded by the Department of Justice, Office of Victims of Crime which enables NCMEC to provide funds to families who must travel overseas to reunite with their recovered child or attend a custody hearing in another country in the case of an international family abduction.

Emerging Trends in NCMEC's Programs to Help Missing and Exploited Children

Throughout NCMEC's thirty-three years of providing services and essential programs to help missing and exploited children, we have seen the crimes against children develop and expand. At each juncture, we have responded by refocusing our messaging and practices so we can best address these crimes against children. Since Congress last considered our authorization, we have seen new crimes emerge that pose unique risks and dangers to children, including online child sex trafficking, children missing from care, and sextortion

In recent years, NCMEC has received approximately 10,000 reports of child sex trafficking to its CyberTipline. NCMEC has continued to expand its specialized resources and technical assistance on cases of child sex trafficking, including expanded analytical assistance and recovery services. NCMEC also provides basic necessities—such as toiletries, shoes, snacks and a change of clothes—to recovered victims through its "Hope Bag" program. NCMEC works with private donors to fund and prepare these bags, which then are provided to children who are recovered from sex trafficking situations across the country.

NCMEC has also worked strenuously to combat the sale of children online for sex. Through our work with missing children cases and our operation of the CyberTipline, we recognize the growing trend and problem of children being offered for sale and bought for rape and other sexual abuse on online classified advertising websites, such as Backpage. NCMEC continues to work with law enforcement officials, the media, private attorneys and Congress to create public awareness of this issue and combat the trafficking of children online.

As mentioned above, NCMEC has experienced tremendous growth in its caseload of children missing from state care since the passage of the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act. Since 2012, the number of missing children reported to NCMEC by state agencies has nearly tripled, necessitating expansion of our case management and analytical resources to support these cases and to provide educational resources and technical assistance to social services as they develop new reporting protocols to NCMEC. Due to the increased vulnerabilities of children who run away from state care, NCMEC will continue to devote increased resources to these cases and to expand its work on helping to prevent and provide recovery services for these children.

Another alarming trend NCMEC has recognized over the past three years is sextortion, a new online exploitation crime directed towards children in which non-physical forms of coercion are used, such as blackmail, to acquire sexual content from the child, engage in sex with the child, or obtain money from the child. NCMEC has seen a dramatic increase in sextortion cases being reported, including a 150% increase in reports from early 2014 to early 2016. NCMEC has responded to the tremendous growth in these reports by devoting additional analytical resources and family support services to these cases. NCMEC also partnered with the U.S. Department of Justice to create a series of public service announcements to educate and inform children, their parents and guardians, and child-serving professionals of the nature and unique dangers to this latest insidious crime of sexual exploitation against children.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you and the Committee with information on NCMEC's vital role in combatting child sexual exploitation and addressing the issue of missing children. And thank you for your continuing support of the work of NCMEC and our partners. We look forward to collaborating with you as we move forward on a reauthorization bill that continues to honor our commitment to serve and assist our nation's most vulnerable children.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you very much, Mr. Clark. Mr. Guthrie, I recognize you for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Thank you, Madam Chairman, for yielding, and particularly to the courtesy of my friends from Michigan and Tennessee for allowing me-to yielding this position to me. I appreciate it very much.

I had a previous commitment, but I wanted to talk to you because I was the principal coauthor of the reauthorization of the Missing Children's Assistance Act, and have been to the NCMEC and seen your dedicated employees and the things that they do, and some of the miracles.

One story, I remember, they said they had an age appropriate, someone into their teenage years, and this lady was in school. They had a picture up, and she looked at it and said "that's me!" and her father had abducted her from her mom and taken her. The story—

It is just amazing stuff that you guys do, and how much we appreciate it.

So I want to talk about the 2013 authorization. Would you discuss what specific changes NCMEC has implemented to comply with the changes made in the 2013 authorization?

Mr. CLARK. Sure. Much of the work that's happened since 2013 has included many of our modernization efforts. We have collaborated a lot more with some of our other private partners, including in our technology updates right now. We're undergoing a total, I would call it, revitalization of how we are able to utilize technology, which is really the most, probably, capable tool we have to fight child sex trafficking.

Updating our website, making our CyperTip capability and analysis go a whole lot faster through partnerships with organizations like Intel Corporation.

We're doing a lot right now through rebuilding to the future and being a very forward leaning organization to be able to combat the scourge of child exploitation.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Thank you. As the committee considers future reauthorizations of the act, will you discuss what changes to the law are needed to support vital work of identifying and recovering missing and exploited children?

Mr. CLARK. Well, the more effort and resources we can pour into this particular problem, for example, since the child exploitation issue has really, as you probably know by some of the statistics I just mentioned, have really doubled, quadrupled, and gotten to be really out of hand.

I think all the efforts that Congress can do to help us combat the issue of child exploitation would be vitally important to us. It's been noted that practically everywhere I go to speak, that issue is really the number one priority.

If you think back since 2013 to the present, and you just look at some of the statistics that we have seen, now at the Center in 2017, the volume in the pipeline is huge.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Again, I appreciate all the work that you have done. Somewhere, after we had the meeting with you guys, we actually went home and did roundtables in different communities. And had people from the—we had judges, we had people from the

different groups. We explained to people and tried to make people aware of how prevalent it is in South Central Kentucky. You know, we think it is just big cities, but it is not.

And hotel owners, we had some name brand franchises, to make sure they were aware, and there were some things and tips we had from your group about let the hotel manager or does it seeming like different people coming in and out all the time, just what to look for, because you know, in a hotel are not seeing the same people every day, but sometimes when you start seeing that.

I thought it was very helpful, and I think we were able to spread some of that information to our district, so I recommend my colleagues to do that.

And again, I appreciate what you are doing, what your staff is doing. Appreciate you yielding, and I definitely appreciate the courtesy of my two friends here for letting me go out of order. I appreciate it very much, and I yield back my time.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Guthrie. Ms. Bonamici, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you again, Mr. Clark, for your testimony. We are policymakers here, but those of us who are parents never really take off our parent hats. I really appreciate your work.

And as I mentioned in my opening statement, I am concerned about children who run away from home. We have a lot of homeless youth in our school systems, and some of those students are emancipated. They do not have a family to go home to, so oftentimes they find themselves struggling to survive on the streets.

Can you talk a little bit more about what NCMEC does to help protect these kids and actually prevent them from getting into sexual exploitation and trafficking?

Mr. CLARK. Well, you have hit on one of the critical areas of our work. We know that in 2016, for example, there were about 20,500 missing children cases. A far percentage of those missing children are what we would refer to as "endangered runaways" or "critical care," often coming from broken homes, or being put into vulnerable circumstances and being very vulnerable to sex trafficking and other crimes, organized crime and their members who take advantage of them for.

And so we look at this as really one of our top priorities. We have been working very closely with a lot of social service organizations. At our Center itself, we have trained numerous volunteers who work closely with us, who are coming from the social service field in their home States, in their home jurisdictions.

And essentially, we are trying to equip them and have them help us, and we can help them be able to identify this very vulnerable and at-risk group.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you very much. You know, there is a group of the population that is especially hesitant to turn to law enforcement, or afraid, the immigrant and refugee population. In recent weeks, there have been increases across the country in ICE enforcement activities that have created some fear among not only our undocumented immigrant population, but also people who might be perceived as being an immigrant.

We are hearing reports of domestic violence victims, for example, who are afraid to go to court to testify. We are hearing about families who are afraid to walk their children to the school bus. People who do not feel safe getting lifesaving services at shelters or food banks, and sadly, children who are afraid to go to school because they do not know if their parents will be home when they get home from school.

So, what can NCMEC do to help families of missing and exploited children in these communities, families who are scared or afraid to turn to law enforcement, but still need to be protected from this type of exploitation?

Mr. CLARK. Certainly. Well, I'm pleased to report that at the National Center, we operate a 24/7 call center, handles about 500 calls a day. We are able to handle all the calls through all the languages. We have up to 190 different languages that we can have at our disposal to be able to interpret.

I'm also pleased to say that I think in many instances, we are a first-stop call when there are circumstances involving missing or exploited children. We know that from our call center and the type of instances they have with taking calls.

So, I think that from the Center's perspective, we have a longstanding track record of being very open, very receptive to whoever calls our hotline and wants to report to us.

And similarly, we know from our capability to put that messaging out, if it's involving a missing child, through our social and digital media outlets, and our close relationship with the news media. We are very proud of our track record, and have numerous cases of recoveries of children from all demographics, so we are very proud of that record.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you. Of course, I mentioned prevention is ideal because then we prevent problems from happening at the outset. And as we know, technology really is a mixed blessing.

Can you talk a little bit about what you can do and the work you are doing with families, so parents can educate their children about what to watch for, what to be aware of, with technology?

Mr. CLARK. Sure. We have a tremendous amount of resources that we're constantly improving upon. We have a NetSmartz411 program, as we refer to it, that helps parents become aware and informed, which is a vital, I call them "tools," that parents should be able to use when it comes to knowing more about what their children are doing online, and how to guide and protect them from a parental situation, to be safer when they are surfing the Net.

We also have our NetSmartz program, which is age appropriate, for children to learn how to safely navigate on the Net, how to be careful, how to be safe, what to do if certain circumstances appear when they're surfing the Net. So that is another program.

The KidSmartz program, another education and awareness program, teaches young children how to be safe when they're just out and about in the public or when they're at school. That might include things like bullying or what to do if someone approaches them to try to entice them to get into a car or go into a park, or in some other place where they shouldn't be.

We are also interpreting—

Ms. BONAMICI. I see my time has expired. Thank you for your important work. I yield back. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Ms. Bonamici. Dr. Roe, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROE. Thank you, Mr. Clark, for what you do and your organization does. I cannot thank you enough. If NCMEC puts one child back in a safe environment, all the investments we have done has been worth it, in my opinion. Every bit of it. I cannot thank you enough for what you are doing.

I heard—I think I heard you say that 86 or 80 something percent of children that actually ran away, were exploited or lost, were from foster care. Did I hear that correctly?

Mr. CLARK. Yes, children missing from a foster care type setting, where they are particularly vulnerable.

Mr. ROE. It looks like that would be an area, if almost 9 out 10 come from that environment, that's a way that we need to educate and certainly vet our foster parents better.

My next-door neighbor is a school principal, elementary school principal, and she fostered some children from her school. It was amazing the education in Tennessee that they put them through—this family through—I wonder if that is being done around the country because it looks to me like that would be the first place I would focus.

Mr. CLARK. Yes, I can say that from the Center's perspective, we're very interested in how we can educate this particular cross section of our country on how to pay particular attention to those children who might be in their care.

We do have and do provide training at the Center for a number of social service organizations and people who routinely come in contact or likely to come in contact with individuals of that nature on how to watch over that particular vulnerable group. That is a group that is also very vulnerable to sex trafficking.

Mr. ROE. I have a constituent in my district who lost two of his children and his wife in the fire in Gatlinburg. His wife had been—I am not going to mention his name now – but his wife had been abused basically, sexually abused as a child, and dealt with these demons her entire life.

He has an idea, and I want to get together with you all and discuss this, about a child, and there could be abuse, there is no question about that, but many young people have a device, a PDA. Would it be feasible to have an app on the device where if a child is in a vulnerable or bad situation, they could punch that—that they could, right then, punch that device with this app, and then immediately contact somebody like you or whatever, let them know they might be in trouble?

And I realize any time you do not let your child go to whatever, they might punch the app. I had three that I might have to punch if they did that. Basically, you see what I am saying, to make it easier with technology for children who are in an exploited situation to get out of it?

Mr. CLARK. Congressman, I'm far from a technology expert, so I'd probably be the last person to answer that question. We have added an app on— that is available now, a child safety app, that has been developed in partnership with one of our supporters just

in the recent year. And I don't know if that's something we might look at to add as a feature to that particular app. It is something we just developed and released about 6 or 8 months ago.

That is relatively new, and that is the way of the future, you're right. So from a technology perspective, we'd be interested in looking at that.

Mr. ROE. I will meet you or I will have my staff meet with you afterwards. Just, I am going to run through, I do not have a lot of time left but you mentioned NCMEC approaches each case of a missing child on an individual basis. Can you kind of walk us through the steps of how that works?

Mr. CLARK. Sure. When a child is reported missing to us, it's very critical that we get the information and word out into the hands of the law enforcement community quickly, if it hasn't already been done so. In certain cases, that is the case.

So once that happens, we use a variety of social media, digital media capabilities to get that information in the area where the child is missing.

So, for example, if a child is missing in Tennessee or somewhere locally, it may not make sense to have that information broadcast to Oregon. So, we're able to geo-fence that information, work quickly with the local media outlets to get them to get that information out. We have even worked with other law enforcement organizations to get that onto digital billboards and the like. So, getting the information out quickly is vital.

If there's any data analytics or case analytics, we have the analysts on board that can work with that as well, to make sure that particular case is given as much priority and attention as there can be.

Mr. ROE. You do not have time to answer this, but maybe at some point in time you can. My time has expired. What are your biggest needs that we could help you with? I will leave you with that thought.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Dr. Roe. Mr. Courtney, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman and thank you, Mr. Clark, for being here today. This is an issue where, again, I think you are going to have strong support from both sides of the aisle to make sure reauthorization moves forward in a timely fashion.

I want to thank the Center for its work with my office and Congressman Erik Paulsen from Minnesota. Last year, we finally passed the Recovering Missing Children's Act, Public Law 184, that President Obama signed into law on June 30.

Again, this was to address a problem that was actually kind of stunning in trying to get your head around it: the New York Times with the help of the Center published a report back in 2010 that the Treasury Department was actually aware of the location of missing kids because of abducting adults having the gall to claim an exemption on their tax returns, but, unfortunately, the privacy provisions of the IRS Code prevented the IRS from sharing that information from investigating law enforcement.

Again, it took 5 years for us to get this measure through, but, as I said, it has now opened up a pathway, so that law enforcement

can apply for a waiver from the IRS privacy provisions to again investigate tax returns to see if a child—to locate a child because of the fact that data is sitting right there in the government's lap. And again, the Center was very instrumental in terms of helping us make that case over that time period.

The question I wanted to ask, so it was June 30 it was signed into law, we have done some follow-up with the Justice Department and the IRS about, again, this tool is out there, making sure that, again, police departments, State and local, are aware of the fact that is there.

And frankly, there has not been a lot of movement in terms of broadcasting it that we, at least certainly, have picked up. I do not know if you have anything you can shed light on or at least we can work together to again making sure this hard fought, you know, measure, which, again, the estimate is it is a couple thousand kids that have exemptions claimed by abducting adults based on the Treasury analysis that was done a number of years ago.

Mr. CLARK. Well, that law certainly makes sense to me, and I applaud the efforts to be able to look at some issue like that and be able to make some headway with it. I'm not deeply informed on where that particular issue stands at the moment.

At the National Center, we sort of embrace the mindset that any tool or technique or capability that we can use to help find missing children, we should do it. That's in conjunction, of course, with all the legal remedies we can find and public policy issues we can employ.

And so, that particular example, I think, is a good one, but I'm not deeply informed on where it currently stands.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, again. Hopefully, we can follow up after today. Again, it is kind of amazing that one arm of the government is aware of the location of a missing child and cannot share it with other arms of the government that are investigating it, so that was the whole point of this measure, is to create a bridge, so that flow of information can occur.

So, thank you for being here today. I look forward to working with you on that.

Mr. CLARK. Would love to work on that.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Courtney. Mr. Walberg, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALBERG. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman and thank you, Mr. Clark, for being here, and as my colleagues have stated, and I echo it again, thanks for the work you do. It is work that many people could not do, and would not choose to do. Not because they do not care, but I am sure each day you are challenged with the stories that you hear, and frustrated at times with the things that stand in your way.

In your testimony, you stated that more can be done to combat child sex trafficking, and I agree. That is why in the 2013 Missing Children's Assistance Act reauthorization, I authored a provision to provide technical assistance to law enforcement and first responders in identifying, locating, and recovering victims of child sex trafficking.

Could you, for us today, provide specific examples of the type of technical assistance NCMEC has provided in compliance with this

provision to those first responders and law enforcement authorities?

Mr. CLARK. Sure and that's a wonderful question. At the Center, we have a whole section we refer to as our Case Analysis Division. They work very closely to help law enforcement and enable them to find missing or exploited children.

In a recent case, for example, in fact, I believe it was part of my initial oral testimony, we were working with the FBI on something called "Operation Cross Country," recovered numerous child sex trafficking victims. That was in direct relationship to a lot of work done at the National Center to be able to help locate, and help the law enforcement sources locate these individuals who are being trafficked.

So that is part of, I think, a broader technical assistance that we are providing out there to the community. Additionally, we have done a lot more with our digital social media capabilities, to be able to let jurisdictions know, particularly in long-term missing cases or where there is exploitation, what can be done to combat it.

So, we're very proud of the work our folks are doing.

Mr. WALBERG. Could you explain further how maintaining the public-private partnership model of NCMEC is vital to expanding and continuing the work that you do?

Mr. CLARK. I believe the way of the future is a public-private partnership in all forms of industry. At the National Center, we're very proud of our record of working across the lines with numerous industry partners. We have a lot of our technology giants who work closely with us, organizations like Google and Intel, or Microsoft.

Then on the State and local level, we work very closely with the National Association of Attorney Generals, the National District Attorneys Association, law enforcement organizations of all types.

Many of us and some on my staff that are with me today are here on the Hill regularly looking at various public policy issues and how we can join together to strengthen existing laws or consider new ones.

All this is a public-private partnership, and it's critical, I'd say, to our success. We can't go this alone. This is not a single-hand fight. This is an all-hands fight. Everybody who can bring something to bear to this problem should.

Mr. WALBERG. Do you truly feel that entities like Google, Microsoft, heavily connected with the social media through the Internet and all of the rest, and some of the trolling places that go on there and the like, do they really get their part from both aspects in this issue?

Mr. CLARK. They do. In fact, a lot of the spike in the number of the CyberTipline reports we have seen in recent years is a direct correlation through the awareness and the reporting done through our electronic service providers, organizations that have something to do with the world wide web, so we have strong partnerships there.

Mr. WALBERG. Okay. We would certainly hope that continues and expands. That is a crucial area that impacts the trafficking in great ways.

Mr. CLARK. Absolutely is.

Mr. WALBERG. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you very much, Mr. Walberg. Mr. Sablan, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SABLAN. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Thank you for having this hearing. Mr. Clark, I have nothing to contribute. I am here to show my support for program you are doing with your organization. Obviously, not everything you do can be made applicable in the Northern Mariana's, but we do not have long highways and things but I am aware we do have these two child who were lost years ago on their way to school, and have not been located. I do not know them still missing or something worse.

I am here to show support, and to also urge the committee and this Congress to authorize the program or at least where it is possibility.

Madam Chair, thank you very much for holding today's hearing and I yield back.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you very much. Mr. Mitchell, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MITCHELL. Thank you, Madam Chairman. You referenced in your testimony as previous question that a significant component of missing children are children in foster care. Do you have any data or anecdotal information on what—it is great to try to find the children, but what causes more often than not foster children to end up running away, which is often the case? Can you share some insights on that?

Mr. CLARK. Well, only through some of the individuals that work closely with the Center, who are more—have level of expertise far beyond what I do—but we often find that there's elements of what might be commonly referred to as "a broken home," children who might be vulnerable.

There's also a group of young adults, young teens, who, for a variety of reasons, get into situations of substance abuse or other situations that might pull them from a home element that puts them into a vulnerable place. They end up in some type of an alternate care or foster care type situation where they become very vulnerable to traffickers and/or organized crime members. So, we work very closely with those types and groups of individuals who come in contact with them.

Mr. MITCHELL. You work— do you work with the State agencies and some of those in terms of training and services to try to help them identify and prevent that? What services –what do you undertake to do that?

Mr. CLARK. Our training center operates training classes, I would say almost on a weekly basis. Since inception, we've trained about 330,000 individuals, some in law enforcement, some from organizations that would address this very issue of vulnerable youth at foster care type situations.

So, that's an effort that we try to pay particular attention to and pour a lot of training resources into as a way to help educate and inform that part of the population.

Mr. MITCHELL. Thank you. You also noted and we are aware that children with autism and other special needs are particularly at-risk, particularly at-risk, in fact, of significantly bad outcomes. You folks have undertaken a variety of services for training law enforce-

ment. Can you outline a couple of those, whether there are enough resources to meet the need in your opinion?

Mr. CLARK. We have been working very closely with organizations like Autism Speaks, I think probably a national leader on that. Now, we have a whole new protocol and training that we use to help law enforcement organizations, particularly when a child goes missing who has autism. We have what I would refer to as "subject matter experts," who advise that local jurisdiction on how to search, where to search, what types of resources are available. That's all free of charge from the National Center.

Sadly, we find cases where the outcome is not what we hoped it would be, but we have been partnering now with a lot of the groups that are involved in autism and how we can help when a child goes missing.

Mr. MITCHELL. Do you have enough resources putting in that to effectively disseminate that to law enforcement across the country at this point?

Mr. CLARK. Well, we could always use more help for that, for sure. I'm always hesitant to come to Congress asking for more, but there are times when we are spread thin. Organizationally, if you look at our workload measures compared to our employee population base today, the workload measures are going up, our employee population base is relatively stagnant.

Mr. MITCHELL. One last question, if I could hop back. Dr. Roe asked, and you did not have time, what the biggest need was you face. Could you-I will take the time to see if we can get an answer to his question-could you help us with that?

Mr. CLARK. Sure can, yeah. We always want to, I think, pour more resources into the technology capabilities that we can use at the Center, especially when it comes to combatting the issues of child exploitation. It's been our biggest area of growth, and that is in terms of crimes and situations that are happening.

The individuals who are working day and night to try to find these at-risk people or people that are being victimized, pour a lot of time and effort into that, so funding and resources for that, I think, would be vital to us as part of our growth in the future.

Mr. MITCHELL. Thank you very much, and I will yield back. Thank you.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Mitchell. Mr. Takano, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TAKANO. Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Clark, as you know, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act does focus on sex trafficking, but it also, I think, made mention of labor trafficking as well. Is there any mechanism in place to identify and ensure appropriate services that are provided to youth labor trafficking victims?

Mr. CLARK. Well, the primary focus of our work at the Center involves child sexual exploitation. From time to time, we are made aware of or come across cases that do involve a child labor issue, and we work very closely with law enforcement on those particular issues and making sure it's addressed.

Although I don't have any particular data that is at my disposal that I could share with you on that, but when we do run across it, we do handle it.

Mr. TAKANO. Well, perhaps, is there data available? What I am aware of is that child welfare agencies are required to identify and document sex trafficking but not labor trafficking. And I think that is kind of a critical gap in screening and services, don't you think?

Mr. CLARK. It would be, and Congressman, what I'd probably have to do is get back to you on that in terms of what the data would show. I'm not deeply informed on what that particular metric is.

Mr. TAKANO. Yeah, I do salute the work that you are doing on sex trafficking, but I think we ought to maybe also not take our foot off the pedal on the work that you are focused on, but also at the same time I think expand the scope to also include labor trafficking.

Can you tell me what services, outreach, and support, is being provided to prevent the trafficking of LGBTQ youth or to respond to their specific needs, what barriers are you encountering in meeting their needs?

Mr. CLARK. I'm not aware of any barriers or particular issues or problems that we have seen at the Center, particularly with our call center, both that handles the calls that are coming in from the public as well as our CyberTipline, that points to any dysfunction, and what we do, we tend to treat every case, every call, every parent, every person who calls in on equal footing, and do our best to help resolve their particular situation, but I'm not aware of any particular concerns or problems from the National Center's point of view.

Mr. TAKANO. Is there any particular outreach because this target group, you know, in order to really be effective in preventing trafficking among members of this group, you might need to look at special efforts to try to reach them.

Mr. CLARK. We will certainly do that. I know that our training materials, education awareness materials, are broadly disseminated. I don't know if that's maybe part of what might, you might also seeking from me. But as I mentioned, I think, to one of the other questions, we work quite sufficiently in trying to train, educate, and inform all cross sections of our vulnerable youth on how to protect themselves.

Mr. TAKANO. What is the relationship between juvenile status offenses and trafficking? How can juvenile offenses be handled in a manner that does not increase youth vulnerability to trafficking? For example, alternatives to arrest and incarceration?

Mr. CLARK. I'm not deeply informed in that particular topic, Congressman, only because most of our work as it relates to vulnerable youth is directed really in the area of sex trafficking, child sex trafficking, online enticement.

I'm certain, though, at least I would believe there would be a correlation between those arrested and other juvenile-type crimes or circumstances that could relate to them being put into a certain area of vulnerability, much as we talked about with some of the endangered runaways or others who tend to end up in the criminal justice system more often.

Mr. TAKANO. Well, so, juvenile status offenses in particular that relate to arrests and incarceration, there may be some relationship;

we ought to investigate. My time is running out and I yield back, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Takano. Mr. Garrett, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARRETT. Thank you, Madam Chair, and I want to thank Mr. Clark for being here today, and tell him that I think it was 11 years ago when I first began working with NCMEC, and I will offer a little bit of introduction by way of essentially an offer to help where I may here.

I started as an attorney in the Computer Crimes Unit of the Virginia Office of the Attorney General, primarily working on CP, and in so doing, getting to know the folks at NCMEC very well.

Ultimately, became a local prosecutor, and started an ICAC Unit that was subordinate to Sheriff Mike Brown and Detective Mike Harmony, who I am sure you know. By the way, I have been texting a couple of those guys. They told me to ask you how Ernie Allen is doing.

Mr. CLARK. Yes.

Mr. GARRETT. Go ahead. They did not say ask rhetorically how Ernie is doing. What's Ernie up to these days?

Mr. CLARK. Yes, I would just say we encounter Ernie quite a bit, and he's doing quite well.

Mr. GARRETT. So, all this is by way of simply suggesting that, number one, the kudos and thanks you have gotten are all well-earned. I want to add my personal experience to this in thanking you.

When we charged and arrested and convicted Joseph Okoh or Daniel Shelton or Michael Robinson, we never knew how many kids we saved because you do not stop this predation, whether it is CP or physical exploitation or sex trafficking. The thing that we learned and that NCMEC has been an advocate for teaching is that you do not wake up in the morning and think preying on a child is a good idea on Tuesday and not wake up feeling the same way on Wednesday. Something is just wrongly wired. So, you cannot ever quantify the good you do, and I think that needs to be noted.

Having said that, there was an obscure ruling by an obscure judge named Gorsuch—I think you know where I am going with this—in the Tenth Circuit last year, I think in August. It was U.S. v. Ackerman, where they ruled that NCMEC, for the purposes of the Fourth Amendment circumstances, was a government actor, and essentially good data that was received through collaboration with a major Internet service provider would be thrown out because you all did not have a warrant as a government actor. With your experience as a marshal amongst other things, you understand the Fourth Amendment well.

Is there anything being done by way of a workaround, would it be prudent to segregate the Tipline from the remainder of NCMEC, or is it simply a paperwork burden that we need to meet in order to respect people's constitutional rights? And I am a big advocate for the Fourth Amendment as well, but what is the procedural change that has been implemented in light of Gorsuch's ruling in Ackerman that will allow us to continue to save these kids and get the convictions on the back end?

Mr. CLARK. Sure. The Ackerman decision required us to take a look at some of our internal practices and policies. We've had to adjust some of that now, just in recent times, for example, making sure some of the law enforcement heads who had been previously on our board of directors are not on our board of directors, making proper separation of that.

We're also looking at internal space needs, to make sure that there is truly separation of duties and responsibilities from the law enforcement components who have a work engagement with us, so that's another area we're working very closely on.

And then addressing any of the other legal issues that might spill out of the Ackerman decision that we think could be helpful to us maintaining our independence, which we strive very, very much to do.

I would like to say on behalf of the Center that we're an organization that likes to drive in the center of the road. We try our darndest to comply with all legal issues and make sure we are in full compliance.

Mr. GARRETT. So has there been a subsequent case to test your protocol changes as it relates to procedures post Ackerman? You understand where I am going with this?

Mr. CLARK. Sure.

Mr. GARRETT. You guys did good stuff as a private entity, the courts ruled you were a government actor, that brings into requirements, obviously, a lot of Fourth Amendment scrutiny, and you have told me you have changed your TTPs: your tactics, techniques, and procedures. Have we had a subsequent test? Do you feel good about where we are, that the information you might receive from the Tipline would be actionable without jeopardizing a conviction?

Mr. CLARK. Sure. And in fact, a few of the things—adjustments we made on the CyberTipline were done even prior to the final outcome of the Ackerman decision, but there have been subsequent cases that have been filed that have been, I guess, similar in nature. I don't know exactly how many, but I'd say a few, as is usually the custom when a case like this comes out.

I can't say that any of them particularly tested our changes or our protocols yet, but I would imagine, in fact, a lot of the reason why we're trying to make some of these adjustments is to make sure we maintain that proper independence as it relates to the work we do.

Mr. GARRETT. I thank you immensely for what you do and for your time, and I would yield back.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Garrett. Ms. Adams, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ADAMS. Thank you, Chairwoman Foxx and Vice Ranking Member Bonamici, for bringing us together to discuss this important topic. Mr. Clark, I want to thank you for sharing some of the work that NCMEC does.

One of the greatest responsibilities of adults in our society is to look out for the health and safety of our children within our communities. As a parent, grandparent, concerned member of my community, I am greatly disturbed by the frequency of children who go

missing, are exploited, or victimized, and I am appreciative of the work that you are doing.

In your testimony, you acknowledge that children with special needs go missing at high rates. Are there other demographics of children that are disproportionately reported missing or fall victim to exploitation or violence?

Mr. CLARK. I don't believe there is any other demographic that might address your particular question. You know, we kind of look at the groups that are vulnerable, and we know as we refer to them, endangered runaways, are particularly vulnerable.

Thankfully, the other categories of individuals who have disappeared or run away, such as those that are involved in a family abduction or a nonfamily abduction, we're seeing a fair amount of those types of cases. The family abduction situation is one that also or could be somewhat troubling, depending on a parent, where they are going, where they're fleeing to, especially if they travel internationally.

Ms. ADAMS. Okay. In D.C., over the last 2 weeks, social media has been a buzz because between 8 to 10 young black and Latino youth went missing, over the course of less than 2 weeks, with very little media attention.

Have you noticed which cases of missing children become visible and which cases do not? And what does NCMEC do to provide those less visible disappearances with resources and support, and what resources and support do you have available for making those more visible?

Mr. CLARK. We constantly make a plea to law enforcement that we are available to help them with resources, and we have a whole organization that we call "Team Adam." It is free of charge, ready to be deployed in any situation where there is a missing child, but we only are involved in those cases which we know about.

Now, simultaneously with this hearing, I think the Washington, D.C. Police Department is hosting a press conference. Some of our staff from the National Center have been invited to attend, and we are sending some people there.

So, the awareness part is critical. We tell law enforcement quite frequently the resources that we can deploy and bring to bear are quite formidable, and they are for the most part free of charge. So, again, we are there at their disposal to help.

I'm not sure which among those cases referred to from Washington, D.C., may have been "intake," as we call it, into our system, so that would be something worth noting.

Ms. ADAMS. Let me ask you a question about, because you mentioned the rise in sextortion, and with the wide spread of social media and digital platforms, it is not hard to imagine this is a growing problem, so what are some of the best practices that NCMEC has found while investigating this issue?

Mr. CLARK. Education and awareness is a key critical thing. We worked in conjunction with the Department of Justice over the last year to produce a public service announcement on this whole topic of sextortion.

We've shared that particular training module with many, many law enforcement organizations, the National Association of Attor-

ney Generals, the National District Attorneys Association, other child advocate groups.

The more parents become aware of this issue, the more children become aware of the issue, I think it helps as a prevention tool.

So, we've done significant work to educate and inform the public of this particular new issue that has popped up on child exploitation.

Ms. ADAMS. Thank you. I am about out of time. Madam Chair, I yield back.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Ms. Adams. Ms. Stefanik, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. STEFANIK. Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you, Mr. Clark, for your testimony today. I want to follow up on Ms. Adams' line of questioning. In your testimony, as she stated, you mentioned the disturbing emerging trend of sextortion, including a 150 percent increase in reports of sextortion since 2014.

My question is two parts. Other than the increase, what are additional factors that led to the Center to label this as an emerging trend? And my second question is, you talked about some of the additional steps NCMEC has taken through family support services and working with law enforcement, have you engaged schools and school districts on this important issue?

Mr. CLARK. Sure. If I may start with the last question you asked first? We are working closely now with private sector partners to try to get some of our training and education materials in all schools. We would love all school organizations to be able to bring our NetSmartz and KidSmartz programs into the school systems to educate particularly the vulnerable groups of youth as they enter their teenage years, which it seems to be the time when the sextortion issue starts to happen.

Now, with the prevalence of super computers that everybody carries on their hip called an iPhone or, you know, that type of technology, it has become increasingly, and I think that is where it is an emerging trend or a vulnerability, increasingly easier for youth to get trapped in or involved in issues of sextortion.

Those who purvey that crime know that, and they are able to, I think, capitalize on the various apps that are out there, the various ways and means and tricks to get young children to engage in something of a sextortion.

Ms. STEFANIK. Two sort of factual questions that I have. Given the emerging trend, can you quantify what percentage of cases of sextortion where the victim is a girl versus whether it is a female or male? What is the breakdown?

Mr. CLARK. I don't have the finite breakdown exactly, but we do see more of a prevalence with young girls. However, we've also seen an increase probably in the last 2 to 3 years of that involving also young boys, so the majority of the cases involve young women, but there is an increase in cases involving young men, young boys.

Ms. STEFANIK. And my second sort of factual follow-up question is how do you intend to measure the effectiveness of these outreach programs to law enforcement, to district attorneys 2 years from now when we are asking this question? How are you going to measure whether NCMEC's efforts have been effective at raising awareness and tackling this issue?

Mr. CLARK. Well, as the new CEO for the organization, I've noticed that perhaps one deficiency we've had in recent years is not doing a lot of good analytics on what we're seeing in metrics.

We see emerging trends and some things that are part of the datasets that come in from a variety of our cases, and things we can easily measure, but it's important to me to be able to measure and perhaps deploy our resources into areas where we see there's an increased need.

So, I believe we're doing that now. We're getting some help from some of our technology partners to be able to do that, to look at big data analytics, predictive analytics, to be able to see where emerging trends are going to happen, and how we can put resources there to help combat it.

So, I would say at our next iteration or hearing, we should be able to point to more success in that area.

Ms. STEFANIK. Thank you, Mr. Clark. I yield back, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Ms. Stefanik. Mr. Allen, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ALLEN. Thank you, Chairwoman, and thank you, Mr. Clark, for being with us today and tackling this. Looks like this problem is becoming more of a problem rather than less of a problem, which is troubling, and although we know that in our society today, evil exists.

And I guess my question is this, and it stems off what the Congressman—Congresswoman Stefanik was talking about is, what are the tools we need to fix this, to curb this, to—? Is there some way we could start on our education system, is there something from the standpoint of the culture, from—?

I mean, what exactly, how do we put our finger on this thing and just tell people just how bad and wrong this is? I know, do we increase penalties, do we—? You know, are you studying ways that we can stop this terrible thing?

Mr. CLARK. Sure. We are always looking at ways we can stop it, but I think some of the increase and some of the concerns that we see with the capabilities of technology today, where we truly are a world without borders, vulnerability of children is spreading essentially worldwide. In fact, a great majority of our CyberTip reports have an international connection, so, you see the whole world is affected by the situation of child exploitation.

Education and awareness from the parents' level, I think, is very, very key. The more informed and educated a parent is about what their children are doing, who they are with, what is on their iPhones, what app they have, and who they are communicating with, there is a level of vulnerability there that many parents may recognize, but not actually take action to do.

Now, how do you get parents to do that? I'm not in every house in America to be able to tell them what to do but, I believe that, sometimes I tell parents "it's okay to be a little paranoid and ask questions about what your children are doing," and that's just a fact of the matter. So, a number of things like that are what are contributing to this.

Mr. ALLEN. Are we getting the word out about how serious this problem is? I mean, a lot of parents, I mean, really do not hear, you do not hear a lot about this on the media or other sources. How

do we get that message out so that parents do what is right as far as the warning their children about these predators that exist out there?

Mr. CLARK. Congressman, I think one area where we are trying to do more of is we have a program called NetSmartz411 that is primarily aimed at the parents. We would love to be able to get that out in more available formats, make it available, easily available. It's part of a training curriculum we're trying to do with our new website, which we are in the process of overhauling.

Being able to put those tools in every home in America, so that parents can have a resource to know what to do. I've ran into many, many parents who, for a variety of reasons, maybe they're just not technology savvy, aren't quite sure how to keep an eye on things or watch what's going on with their youngsters.

Mr. ALLEN. Well, obviously, young people are notoriously curious, which is not a bad thing, but at the same time when you have evil lurking like this out there, you have to deal with it. So, just let us know whatever we can do to curb this and it would really be great if we could put a stop to this cause it is tragic.

Mr. CLARK. Fantastic, yes.

Mr. ALLEN. Thank you, sir. I yield back.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Allen. Mr. Clark, I will yield to myself now 5 minutes. We very much appreciate your testimony today, and the great work that the Center is doing.

You have mentioned shifting resources into electronic cyber security and those kinds of areas, which certainly makes sense but could you provide us some examples of how program evaluation has led to shifting resources to change the way you are operating? Because we are very much concerned about accountability and what is being done to evaluate at every level and every program that we fund.

Mr. CLARK. Certainly and that is testimony to the committee in making sure not only that you are appropriating money wisely, but also supporting the great work we're doing.

One of the things I've been doing as CEO is examining all areas of our operations, particularly with an eye toward putting the financial resources and the employee resources where they're most needed, and because of the circumstances, as we have talked about a lot in this hearing, involving child exploitation, that is a key area where we want to see some much needed resource growth.

On the missing children side as well, we continue to see a number of vulnerabilities there. I think when you look back on the recent years, last few years, we continue to see a lot of efforts poured into the long-term missing cases, a topic that's not often talked about too much. But there is, sadly, many cases in the country still, long-term missing cases, where the effort to continue to look for them has not been as vibrant as it should be.

At the National Center, however, we pride ourselves in never closing a case, and making sure we are directing those resources there to help find long-term missing children.

In a recent case, as you may have heard in the news, involving a young boy named Jacob Wetterling—his mother serves on our board—sadly, after 27 years, he was found deceased, had been murdered, and had been sexually assaulted.

That particular case reminds us all of the importance of deploying our resources and spending the money wisely.

I want to be able to give an account for every penny and every dollar that we're spending and where it's going, both to the Congress, members of Congress, and our private partners as well.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you. I would like to know also how you are working with the various partner organizations, but mainly the States, to improve what the States are doing, both to prevent children from becoming missing and to help find missing children because this is an not area where the Federal Government is going to be able to solve the problem. This has got to be solved at the local and State level, so please tell us what is happening through the partner organizations and perhaps, if you cannot answer everything, give us some examples of States that are doing a better job than others. You can put that in writing later, if you need to.

Mr. CLARK. Certainly. There is much of our effort to do on the prevention side as well as training and educating law enforcement. Barely a week goes by that we don't have law enforcement organizations from State organizations, county sheriffs, all coming to the National Center to receive training and insight on how to not only look for missing children, but to solve the issue of exploitation.

We also have long-term missing child case studies that go on pretty much on a monthly basis. Every month, we have at least one of those cases that we do, and we bring in all the law enforcement organizations that have some particular touch in that case, and we review every single lead to see if we can revitalize that.

A third example is something being done in the State of Texas, where they have developed a particular interdiction program where they are now looking for exploited children or even missing children when they make vehicle stops with the State Police.

We have helped with some of that training, and continue to want to help with that training because now we've seen some actual child sex trafficking victims rescued by this particular program. That training is now spreading to other States. There is a pretty significant call for that training to be done. In fact, I believe it's going to be done in the State of Oregon very, very soon as well.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you very much. Mr. Thompson, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON. Madam Chairwoman, thank you. Thank you so much for hosting this, and my apologies for getting here late, but I wanted to come and just first of all thank you, Mr. Clark, for your leadership with this. The Center does such great work.

This past year, I had the privilege and opportunity to spend some time on just one of the days of the 2016 10th Anniversary Fireball Run. And these amazing teams that come together, spend a lot of resources for 8 days, 2,000 miles, each one of them essentially adopt one of these children that are listed as missing, distributing thousands of flyers in all the communities where they go.

I think last I looked, this annual event was credited with recovering 44 children, which is very much appreciated. It is just a righteous volunteer effort that goes on.

So, I want to thank you for your leadership and service, and just your commitment to recover and protect missing and exploited children.

Just a quick question. Can you talk about the Child Victim Identification Program and how does it operate and what impact has it had and why is it so important?

Mr. CLARK. That's one of our more vital and critical programs. The Child Victim Identification Program has a bunch of our employees that have somewhat of what I would say is a terrible duty, a horrible duty, of looking at all the images, the videos, all the garbage, I might say, that comes in involving exploited children, sexually abused children.

What they look for is particular clues in those images that might help identify where in the world that particular child is. So, they go about that duty, a terrible duty, with a great deal of expertise, and I'm pleased to report that they have made numerous child recoveries by examining videos and pictures, and being able to try to spot clues in those pictures and get that in the hands of law enforcement.

I would say not a week goes by that I don't get information on a case or a situation where they have done that particular good work, but it is very, very difficult work.

Mr. THOMPSON. Well, thank you again to you and your staff. I cannot imagine how difficult that would be to have that, important as it is, to be able to have to review those images in terms of their investigation work but I—you know, the recovery of one child is so important it is done, just appreciate you and your staff taking that on.

Thank you, Madam Chair, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CLARK. There are, If I may, there are earthly angels among us. And—

Mr. THOMPSON. Sure.

Mr. CLARK. That is part of the group that's there.

Mr. THOMPSON. Yeah, thank you.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you. I want to say thank you, again, to Mr. Clark for taking the time to testify before the committee today and I want to recognize Ms. Bonamici for her closing remarks.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you very much, Madam Chairwoman, and briefly, again, thank you so much, Mr. Clark, for your important work, and Chair Foxx, for holding this hearing. It is refreshingly bipartisan when we can come together and all agree that we need to work on this important issue.

Just a follow-up on Mr. Garrett's comment about the independence. I know there is bipartisan support for making sure that we can, as Mr. Garrett said, protect people's Fourth Amendment rights, but still maintain the independence of the Center, so I wanted to mention that.

And I did notice that a significant majority of the missing children fall within that endangered runaway category, so I know we have a lot of potential on this committee to address the root causes that go into that, why do children run away from home, and our work on the Every Student Succeeds Act, for example, with the school safety provisions, career and technical education that provides engaging hands-on education.

We have a lot of potential to really address the needs of our students, and I hope that we can work on making sure those programs are funded and schools can have counselors and places where students can go at school, and hopefully keep them engaged and out of the dangerous situations where they are targeted.

So, again, thank you so much, Chair Foxx and Mr. Clark for this important hearing, and I yield back. Thank you.

Chairwoman FOXX. Thank you very much, Ms. Bonamici. And I agree with Ms. Bonamici on the fact that this really is a bipartisan issue. We are all concerned with protecting children, especially the vulnerable children in our society.

And it is an issue that I think all levels of government need to be concerned about, but we all know that the government closest to the people is generally able to solve these problems, so I am very interested in the work that the Center does with local communities, the police forces, the State governments, particularly when we see these staggering numbers of children who run away from foster care.

And we know there are some bad situations with foster care, but for the most part, the people who are willing to foster children are there because they care and love the children, and I admire them so much.

But my understanding from reading a long, long time ago in child development is even children who are in bad situations at home yearn to be with their families. And I think that is a critical element here where we need to do more some way or another to help dysfunctional families, and having worked with facilities that worked with abused children, we know we cannot just fix children, we have to fix families, and that is where the problems lie but again, it is an issue that needs to be solved at all the levels of our government.

So, I appreciate, again, what you and your staff do, and we appreciate part of your staff at least being here with us today, and I want to give them our appreciation, and as you said, all of the people who work closely with you who are not paid staff, but come in because they care about children in our country and do everything they can and I think they are unsung heroes, and all that we can do to acknowledge their work, we should do.

So, thank you all very much. There being no further business, the committee stands adjourned.

[Additional submission by Chairwoman Foxx follows:]

Protecting Vulnerable Children

- There were **more than 465,000 reports** of missing children in 2016.
- The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children assisted with approximately **21,000 cases**:
  - **90%** were endangered runaways.
  - Roughly **1 in 6** endangered runaways were likely **victims of child sex trafficking**.

[Additional submission by Mr. Scott follows:]

Remarks of Ranking Member Bobby Scott
Full Committee Hearing: *"Honoring Our Commitment to Recover and Protect Missing and Exploited Children"*
2175 Rayburn House Office Building
Thursday, March 16, 2017 - 10:00 am

Thank you Chairwoman Foxx for convening today's hearing, and thank you Mr. Clark for coming to testify before the Committee and provide an update on the activities of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

The terror experienced by parents of a missing child is unfathomable. The child and parents both experience pain, trauma, fear, and uncertainty. That is why affected families need the full support of law enforcement, schools, businesses and other entities who may be able to assist in locating and recovering missing or exploited children.

Since its creation in 1984 through the Missing Children's Assistance Act, NCMEC, a private, nonprofit organization, has played a central role in reuniting children with their families. NCMEC works to end child sexual exploitation and trafficking through many different efforts,

including working directly with law enforcement, participating in the AMBER Alert program, providing training and technical assistance to law enforcement, offering guidance and information to community partners, and operating a tip line for reporting missing children.

In 2013, Congress reauthorized the Missing Children's Assistance Act and updated the role of NCMEC, including by requiring the organization to coordinate with the Interagency Council on Homelessness in order to address the high number of sex trafficking victims who are homeless youth.

Runaway and homeless youth are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and trafficking. Many of these youth were in the care of social services or foster care when they ran away and may have experienced sexual abuse before they left. These children are at increased risk of being victimized and forced to engage in "survival sex" in exchange for food, shelter, or money.

I look forward to working with Republicans in drafting a bipartisan reauthorization that ensures NCMEC maintains its independent status so it can continue to protect children, especially those in vulnerable situations, like runaway and homeless youth.

Despite the best efforts of NCMEC, more than 10,000 children still go missing each year and scores of children are forced into sexual exploitation and trafficking. I am eager to hear from Mr. Clark about NCMEC's efforts to decrease this number and what federal supports he needs.

I yield back.

[Questions submitted for the record and their responses follow:]

MAJORITY MEMBERS:

VIRGINIA FOXX, NORTH CAROLINA, *Chairwoman*

JOE WILSON, SOUTH CAROLINA
DUNCAN HUNTER, CALIFORNIA
DAVID P. ROE, TENNESSEE
GLENN "GT" THOMPSON, PENNSYLVANIA
TIM WALBERG, MICHIGAN
BRETT GUTHRIE, KENTUCKY
TODD ROKITA, INDIANA
LOU BARLETTA, PENNSYLVANIA
LUKE MESSER, INDIANA
BRADLEY BYRNE, ALABAMA
DAVID BRAT, VIRGINIA
GLENN GROTHMAN, WISCONSIN
STEVE RUSSELL, OKLAHOMA
ELISE STEFANIK, NEW YORK
RICK W. ALLEN, GEORGIA
JASON LEWIS, MINNESOTA
FRANCIS ROONEY, FLORIDA
PAUL MITCHELL, MICHIGAN
TOM GARRETT, JR., VIRGINIA
LLOYD K. SMUCKER, PENNSYLVANIA
A. DREW FERGUSON, IV, GEORGIA

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND THE WORKFORCE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
2176 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6100

MINORITY MEMBERS:

ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT, VIRGINIA,
Ranking Member

SUSAN A. DAVIS, CALIFORNIA
RAÚL M. GRIJALVA, ARIZONA
JOE COURTNEY, CONNECTICUT
MARCIA L. FUDGE, OHIO
JARED POLIS, COLORADO
GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN,
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
FREDERICA S. WILSON, FLORIDA
SUZANNE BONAMICI, OREGON
MARK TAKANO, CALIFORNIA
ALMA S. ADAMS, NORTH CAROLINA
MARK DESAULNIER, CALIFORNIA
DONALD NORCROSS, NEW JERSEY
LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER, DELAWARE
RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHI, ILLINOIS
CAROL SHEA-PORTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE
ADRIANO ESPAILLAT, NEW YORK

April 11, 2017

Mr. John F. Clark
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
699 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mr. Clark:

Thank you, again, for testifying at the March 16, 2017, hearing entitled "Honoring Our Commitment to Recover and Protect Missing and Exploited Children"

As a follow-up, please find enclosed additional questions submitted by members of the Committee after the hearing. Please provide written responses no later than Tuesday, May 2, 2017, for inclusion in the final hearing record. Responses should be sent to the Education Legislative Assistant, Sheariah Yousefi, who can be contacted at (202) 225-6558.

We appreciate your contribution to the work of the Committee.

Sincerely,

Virginia Foxx

Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman

Enclosure

Rep. Roe (R-TN)

1. In your testimony you stated that last year, one in six runaway children reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) were likely sex trafficking victims, and 86 percent of these children ran away from social services or foster care. Are there ways that Congress can help bring attention to the challenges facing missing and exploited children in the foster care system?

Rep. Polis (D-CO)

1. Mr. Clark, thank you for everything NCMEC is doing. In 2015, the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) received over 10,000 individual reports of children who had gone missing. I'm especially thankful for the work CBI is doing, and I understand your organization is a partner of theirs. In your testimony, you mentioned that 86 percent of children who ran away were receiving social services or living in foster care.

    a. Can you talk about why that number is so disproportionately high?

    b. What is your organization doing to work with state agencies to better support children living in foster care and prevent runaways from happening?

2. As you may know, runaway youth are significantly more likely to identify as LGBTQ. And of the 1.6 million youth who are homeless, some studies suggest that up to 40 percent of them identify as LGBTQ. These youth often end up on the streets because they're kicked out of their home by their own family, or they run away because they're neglected or disowned by their family after they come out. On top of that, in 2017, it is still legal in many states for kids to be bullied because they're LGBTQ, and this body refuses to take up legislation that would prohibit discrimination or bullying in school based on sexual orientation or gender identity. This no doubt exacerbates the problem. In your testimony, you didn't mention anything about NCMEC's services for LGBTQ youth. In your latest annual report, there's no mention of services specifically serving that population. A search on your website yields virtually no reference to support for LGBTQ youth. Once LGBTQ youth do runaway and are homeless, they are far more susceptible to physical and sexual assault, and they are more likely to attempt suicide. As you can imagine, it would be important to have specialized services prepared to assist and support LGBTQ youth who run away or are missing.

    a. What is NCMEC doing to support LGBTQ youth, and how are you working with state and federal agencies to ensure that LGBTQ youth receive the specialized support services they need?

    b. In your education and training programs, are you including cultural competency training so teachers, police officers, and legal professionals know how to work with and support LGBTQ youth, and prevent runaways from happening?

Charles B. Wang International
Children's Building
699 Prince St.
Alexandria, VA 22314-3175
U.S.A.

Telephone 703-224-2150

Fax 703-224-2122

www.missingkids.com

www.cybertipline.com

Like us
/missingkids

Follow us
@missingkids

Other offices
California
Florida
New York
Texas

May 1, 2017

BY E-MAIL

Chairwoman Virginia Foxx
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Foxx:

Thank you for the opportunity to supplement my testimony provided to the Committee on Education and the Workforce on March 16, 2017. As indicated in my testimony, the success of The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children is a direct result of Congress' steadfast commitment to NCMEC's programs of work to help protect children from abduction and exploitation and help families and law enforcement find missing children and prevent child victimization. NCMEC appreciates the Committee's continued support, and I welcome the chance to provide additional information regarding our programs. In response to the questions posed by Representatives Roe and Polis, we have prepared the responses below.

Congressman Phil Roe (R-TN)

1. **In your testimony, you stated that last year, one in six runaway children reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) were likely sex trafficking victims, and 86 percent of these children ran away from social services or foster care. Are there ways that Congress can help bring attention to the challenges facing missing and exploited children in the foster care system?**

   As you are probably aware, Congress continues to work on legislation aimed at addressing the needs and vulnerabilities of children in the foster care system from multiple vantage points. Recently, Congress passed the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014, legislation that NCMEC was proud to support. The legislation included a small, but important, provision requiring states to report all children who go missing from care to law enforcement and to NCMEC. We believe this new reporting requirement enables us to better assist and support the efforts of state and local jurisdictions in locating and returning missing children to safe places. Additionally, it enables NCMEC to provide coordinated and uniform resources to every missing child, regardless of their circumstances.

   NCMEC also supported key provisions of the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2016 (H.R. 5456), legislation aimed at strengthening families and reducing the need for placements in foster care in the first place. While the bill was not passed before the end of the 114th Congress, we are hopeful that a similar bill will move forward this Congress.

Finally, we believe the work by the Committee on the Improving Support for Missing and Exploited Children Act (H.R. 1808) is another strong show of support from Congress for these vulnerable children. H.R. 1808 incorporates provisions that modernize NCMEC's funding authorization and programs, including strong support for our work on supporting children missing from care.

As Congress continues to consider ways to address this issue, NCMEC stands ready to work with you and other Members of Congress. We thank you for your continued dedication to the safety of these children, their families and guardians, and other child serving professionals.

Congressman Jared Polis (D-CO)

1. **Mr. Clark, thank you for everything NCMEC is doing. In 2015, the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) received over 10,000 individual reports of children who had gone missing. I'm especially thankful for the work CBI is doing, and I understand your organization is a partner of theirs. In your testimony, you mentioned that 86 percent of children who ran away were receiving social services or living in foster care.**

    a. **Can you talk about why that number is so disproportionately high?**

    As you may be aware, Congress passed the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113-183), legislation that NCMEC was proud to support. The legislation included a small, but important, provision requiring states to report all children who go missing from care to law enforcement and to NCMEC.

    We have long known children in care are targeted by traffickers for victimization and are susceptible to other endangerments when they run away. Since states have begun implementing Pub. L. 113-183, we are getting an even more comprehensive look at this trend. Not only are reports of children missing from care increasing dramatically, we are seeing a corresponding dramatic increase in the victimization of children missing from care through sex trafficking.

    Historically, most child sex trafficking victims are children who have been reported to NCMEC as missing from care—for instance, in 2014, 68% of likely child sex trafficking victims were children who went missing from care; 74% in 2015, and 86% in 2016. Last year, while one in six children reported as missing from care to NCMEC were likely child sex trafficking victims, only one in eleven of missing children who were **not** missing from care, were likely child sex trafficking victims.

    Now that NCMEC is getting a broader look at children missing from care, we are developing a more comprehensive view as to how these children are impacted by child sex trafficking. However, there are very few legal requirements to report children who are missing, but **not** missing from care to NCMEC, so our data is not nearly as comprehensive for all groups of children.

We believe the new reporting requirement enables us to better assist and support the efforts of state and local jurisdictions in locating and returning missing children to safe places. Additionally, it enables NCMEC to provide coordinated and uniform resources to every missing child, regardless of the circumstances in which they have gone missing.

As we continue to work with states and localities on the implementation of this legislation, we will keep you and other Members of Congress informed and updated on our efforts.

b. What is your organization doing to work with state agencies to better support children living in foster care and prevent runaways from happening?

By virtue of our case work with both missing and exploited children cases, NCMEC has become increasingly aware of the increased risk faced by many children who run away, especially children who run away from state care, and who are particularly vulnerable to dangers including sex trafficking.

To expand our ability to assist children missing from care, NCMEC supported passage of the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act in September 2014. As you know, this law requires that states report foster children who go missing or run away from state care to NCMEC, as well as to law enforcement.

Since the bill was enacted, we have spent a lot of time and resources reaching out to social service agencies and local jurisdictions across the country to ensure that these vulnerable children are reported to NCMEC. From these reports, we continue to see a significant increase in number of children missing from care.

Through this enhanced reporting, we have already developed better insights enabling us to assist and support the efforts of state and local jurisdictions to locate and return missing children to safe places. This reporting requirement also enables NCMEC to better provide coordinated resources to every missing child, regardless of the circumstances in which they have gone missing.

2. **As you may know, runaway youth are significantly more likely to identify as LGBTQ. And of the 1. 6 million youth who are homeless, some studies suggest that up to 40 percent of them identify as LGBTQ. These youth often end up on the streets because they're kicked out of their home by their own family, or they run away because they're neglected or disowned by their family after they come out. On top of that, in 2017, it is still legal in many states for kids to be bullied because they're LGBTQ, and this body refuses to take up legislation that would prohibit discrimination or bullying in school based on sexual orientation or gender identity. This no doubt exacerbates the problem. In your testimony, you didn't mention anything about NCMEC's services for LGBTQ youth. In your latest annual report, there's no mention of services specifically serving that population. A search on your website yields virtually no reference to support for LGBTQ youth. Once LGBTQ youth do runaway and are homeless, they are far more susceptible to physical and sexual assault, and they are more likely to attempt suicide. As you can imagine, it would be important to have specialized services prepared to assist and support LGBTQ youth who run away or are missing.**

   a. **What is NCMEC doing to support LGBTQ youth, and how are you working with state and federal agencies to ensure that LGBTQ youth receive the specialized support services they need?**

   NCMEC knows that children who identify as LGBTQ are a vulnerable segment of the population. They are more likely than their non-LGBTQ peers to face family and peer rejection, which may increase risk of suicidal tendencies, depression, and drug use. They are also overrepresented in the foster care system, and are more likely to be homeless due to being rejected by family members and caregivers.

   NCMEC recognizes the increased risks homelessness can pose to a child's safety, particularly with respect to child sex trafficking. In 2013, NCMEC launched a new training program titled Child Sex Trafficking: Awareness & Response (CSTAR) to address the increased vulnerability of homeless and runaway youth to victimization through sex trafficking. The CSTAR training program is designed to educate a range of law enforcement, state agency and educational personnel on the unique dynamics involved in identifying, recovering, and providing assistance to child sex trafficking victims, including children who identify as LGBTQ.

   Additionally, NCMEC continues to build on its long-standing relationship with the National Runaway Safeline and is engaged in proactive communications with homeless shelters and nonprofit and state agencies that serve runaway and homeless youth regarding partnerships we can form to provide a fuller range of services to this at-risk population.

   NCMEC also works with key stakeholders at state agencies and shelters to help identify missing children who may pass through their facilities or be at risk of exploitation. These continued outreach efforts have led to coordination among shelter staff, NCMEC and law enforcement to marshal resources to assist homeless and runaway children.

b. **In your education and training programs, are you including cultural competency training so teachers, police officers, and legal professionals know how to work with and support LGBTQ youth, and prevent runaways from happening?**

NCMEC uniquely blends our safety and prevention programs with lessons learned from real-life incidents of missing and exploited children. NCMEC is constantly reviewing reports regarding children who go missing from care and other endangered runaways to identify trends that help shape our outreach and prevention materials.

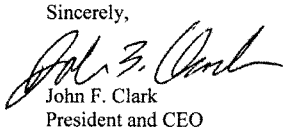
Over the past five years, the largest number of children reported missing to NCMEC were endangered runaways. While the number of endangered runaways continues to increase, it has become increasingly clear to NCMEC that one of the most important steps in protecting children is educating them and their families, teachers, and communities about child sex trafficking and the particular dangers LGBTQ children may face.

This information helps NCMEC develop new and updated trainings and outreach materials that are targeted to address critical populations and help identify emerging issues. One such example is NCMEC's CSTAR training that allows us to engage with law enforcement, state agency and education personnel on ways to assist LGTBQ children who are victims of sex trafficking.

Finally, NCMEC has master-level trained mental health and child welfare professionals who work to proactively help families, law enforcement, social service agencies, and mental health agencies by providing a support network for child victims and their families. Some of the victim and family support services provided by NCMEC include: immediate crisis intervention when a family needs help with a missing, exploited, or recovered child; support for survivors of abduction and exploitation; emotional support for endangered runaways, including children who identify as LGBTQ, parents, guardians, and families; and referrals to appropriate agencies and mental health professionals.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide you with this additional information and please let me know if there is anything further you may need.

Sincerely,



John F. Clark
President and CEO

[Whereupon, at 11:22 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

○