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**Senate Passes Heller-Backed Bill to Combat Online Exploitation of Children**

**Washington, D.C.** –The U.S. Senate passed the PROTECT Our Children Act, legislation introduced by U.S. Senators Dean Heller (R-NV), John Cornyn (R-TX), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN).

The PROTECT Our Children Act would reauthorize the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force Program, a national network of 61 coordinated task forces that combat child exploitation across the country. The ICACs aid local and state law enforcement in the creation and implementation of effective responses to technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation. In order to develop effective response strategies to online child victimization, the ICACs offer~~s~~ guidance on victim support, forensic and investigative components, training and technical assistance, and prevention and community education.

“By passing this legislation, the U.S. Senate is taking a positive step forward in protecting children who use the internet. As a father and now a grandfather, I believe we should provide local law enforcement the tools to pursue child predators that are looking to exploit our children online,” **said Heller**. “I want to thank Cornyn and Blumenthal for their leadership and hope to see the House of Representatives act quickly to bring this bill to the President’s desk to become law.”

The Judiciary Committee’s approval of the PROTECT Our Children Act is a recognition that we must do more to empower local law enforcement with the tools they need to better pursue online predators and protect our children and grandchildren from them,” **said Heller**. “I thank Senators Cornyn and Blumenthal for their leadership on this issue, and I’ll continue to work with my colleagues to advance solutions that address crimes against the most vulnerable among us.”

Organizations that support the PROTECT Our Children Act include the National Association to Protect Children (PROTECT), National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network), National Children’s Alliance, Rights4Girls, Shared Hope, Fraternal Order of Police, National Association of Police Organizations, Sergeants Benevolent Association, Major County Sheriffs of America, Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies, National Sheriffs Association, Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, National District Attorneys Association, National Criminal Justice Association, and Major City Chiefs Police Association.

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