



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY McMASTER
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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McMaster Rips Faulty Internet Predator Report

S.C. withdraws from group that commissioned Harvard study

Columbia, S.C. – Attorney General Henry McMaster today criticized a report issued by Harvard University that downplayed the threat children face online from sex predators. The report was commissioned by a National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) working group looking into the problem of Internet predators lurking on social networking sites such as MySpace.com.

In a letter written to the NAAG working group chairmen, Attorneys General Blumenthal (Connecticut) and Cooper (North Carolina), McMaster cites very convincing evidence produced by his Internet Predator Task Force that illustrates a tremendous problem posed to children by predators seeking to engage them for sexual exploitation, or worse.

As a result, McMaster has withdrawn South Carolina as a participant in the NAAG working group.

Read the letter: <http://www.scag.gov/newsroom/pdf/2009/internetsafetyreport.pdf>

The Internet Predator problem is so widely recognized in South Carolina alone, McMaster writes, that it has prompted forty-three (43) law enforcement agencies (including SLED) since 2004 to join the Task Force by placing undercover officers on the Internet to locate predators before they are able to harm children.

Using the Internet predator law he pushed through the General Assembly in 2004, McMaster and the ICAC Task Force have aggressively investigated and prosecuted child cyber enticement cases. The law makes it a crime to stalk, lure or entice a child for abduction or sexual assault by any means, including the Internet.

As of today, those efforts have resulted in one hundred forty-seven (147) total arrests and have so far sixty-six (66) convictions – most by guilty plea. The rest are pending. No cases have been lost.

“Ask any law enforcement officer, and they will tell you – the Internet is full of predators seeking to sexually harm our children – here and across America,” said McMaster. “To deny the seriousness of this problem presents an even more horrible risk to the children.”

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