



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY MCMASTER
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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AG's Internet Predator Task Force Prosecution Record: 101-0

50 Law Enforcement Agencies Are Now Task Force Members

Columbia, S.C. – Attorney General Henry McMaster announced today that the Attorney General's Office and the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force it oversees **has successfully prosecuted one hundred one (101) Internet Child Predators** since the Criminal Solicitation of a Minor law (ten (10) year felony) was passed in April 2004.

The Task Force has arrested one hundred seventy (170) suspected Internet Predators since April 2004.

Every single case prosecuted to date has resulted in conviction; ninety-eight (98) were the result of guilty pleas and three (3) defendants were found guilty at trial. These cases were all prosecuted by the Attorney General's Office.

When the Internet Predator Law passed in 2004, SLED was the only law enforcement agency on the Task Force. In 2005, McMaster sought to expand the Task Force to include local law enforcement agencies. To date, fifty (50) law enforcement agencies across the state have joined the Task Force. In all, seventy-five (75) law enforcement officers are associated with the Task Force through these member agencies.

McMaster made the announcements amid a host of law enforcement officers representing a number of the law enforcement agencies that have joined the Task Force since 2005.

“These milestones in our fight against Internet Child Predators in South Carolina are a testament to the professionalism and dedication of the numerous law enforcement officers in the state that work in daily cooperation with each other to make this Task Force a success,” said McMaster.

“South Carolina's Internet Child Predator law is among the strongest in the nation. It has been tested and appealed, and it has won every time. The overwhelming success of our prosecutions, and the vigorous work of fifty law enforcement agencies across the state is sending a clear message – if Internet Predators try to harm our children, they'll be caught and aggressively prosecuted.”

For a complete summary of the topics covered above, please view these links:

One Hundred One Convictions:

http://www.scag.gov/newsroom/pdf/2009/icac_convicted.pdf

Fifty (50) Task Force Member Agencies:

http://www.scag.gov/newsroom/pdf/2009/icac_agencies.pdf

One Hundred Seventy (170) Task Force Arrests:

http://www.scag.gov/newsroom/pdf/2009/icac_arrested.pdf

McMaster stressed that all defendants are presumed innocent unless and until they are proven guilty in a court of law.

Timeline:

Spring 2004 – McMaster and Rep. Murrell Smith (Sumter) push the Criminal Solicitation of a Minor bill through the legislature to become law. Internet Predator Task Force stings begin at SLED.

Summer 2005 – McMaster begins expansion of the Task Force to include local law enforcement agencies.

November 2007 – 100 Predator arrests announced. At that time, thirty-three (33) cases had gone to trial. There were thirty-seven (37) law enforcement agencies on the Task Force.

Spring 2009 – Challenge to the Internet Child Predator is overturned by the South Carolina Supreme Court.

Present – 101 Convictions (100% success rate), 50 law enforcement agencies on the Task Force, 170 Arrests.

Online Resources:

<http://www.sckids.org/>

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