



February 6, 2026

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Chair
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

On behalf of the National Association of Assistant United States Attorneys (NAAUSA), we write to express our strong support for the bipartisan legislative package introduced to protect children from online exploitation and coercion, including the Sentencing Accountability for Exploitation Act, the Ending Coercion of Children and Harm Online Act, and the Stop Sextortion Act.

Federal prosecutors across the country are on the front lines of investigating and prosecuting online child exploitation offenses. While technology has rapidly evolved—expanding the reach, scale, and severity of online harm—federal statutes and sentencing frameworks have not always kept pace. This legislative package meaningfully addresses that gap by modernizing federal law, strengthening prosecutorial tools, and improving outcomes for victims.

Sentencing Accountability for Exploitation Act (SAFE Act)

NAAUSA strongly supports the Sentencing Accountability for Exploitation Act because it modernizes federal sentencing guidelines to reflect the realities of contemporary child exploitation offenses. Assistant United States Attorneys regularly prosecute crimes involving encrypted platforms, anonymous online networks, large-scale image trading, and repeated victimization—conduct that is not always adequately or consistently captured by existing guideline structures.

By directing the U.S. Sentencing Commission to update guidelines to account for aggravating factors such as participation in organized exploitation networks, use of technology to conceal identity, multiple victims, volume of material, and extended patterns of abuse, this legislation strengthens sentencing credibility and consistency across federal districts. These reforms



enhance prosecutors' ability to advocate for sentences that accurately reflect the seriousness of the offense, promote deterrence, and protect the public—consistent with the purposes of sentencing under 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a).

Importantly, the Act also recognizes the profound harm inflicted on victims, including cases where exploitation contributes to suicide or attempted suicide—an outcome federal prosecutors increasingly encounter in sextortion and coercion cases.

Ending Coercion of Children and Harm Online Act (ECCHO Act)

NAAUSA strongly supports the Ending Coercion of Children and Harm Online Act because it closes a critical gap in federal criminal law. Prosecutors are seeing a disturbing rise in cases where offenders coerce minors—often through threats, humiliation, extortion, or doxxing—into committing acts of self-harm, violence against others, or other serious criminal conduct.

Currently, prosecutors are often forced to rely on statutes that were not designed to address this form of online psychological coercion, limiting accountability and creating uncertainty in charging decisions. This bill establishes a clear, tailored federal offense that reflects how these crimes are actually perpetrated in the digital environment and provides appropriate penalties when coercion results in severe injury or death.

By aligning the statute with existing child exploitation frameworks and investigative structures, the bill strengthens federal prosecutors' ability to respond swiftly and effectively to these cases while improving coordination with law enforcement and victim-support systems.

Stop Sextortion Act

NAAUSA also strongly supports the Stop Sextortion Act, which addresses well-documented evidentiary and statutory gaps in sextortion prosecutions. Offenders frequently coerce victims by threatening to release sexual images—sometimes images that do not exist—knowing that fear alone can compel compliance. Under current law, the absence of actual image possession can complicate charging decisions and limit accountability.

This legislation appropriately criminalizes the act of threatening to distribute sexual images to extort, coerce, or intimidate victims, regardless of whether such images exist. It also enhances penalties for sextortion offenses, better aligning punishment with the severe psychological harm inflicted on victims and the documented link between sextortion and youth suicide.

Conclusion

Collectively, this legislative package equips federal prosecutors with modernized statutes and sentencing tools that reflect the realities of online child exploitation, strengthen deterrence,



improve sentencing consistency, and prioritize victim protection. These reforms will enhance the Department of Justice's ability to hold offenders accountable while ensuring federal law keeps pace with evolving technologies and criminal tactics.

NAAUSA appreciates the Committee's bipartisan leadership on these critical issues and strongly urges swift consideration and enactment of this legislative package. We stand ready to provide technical assistance or prosecutorial insight as these measures move forward.

Thank you for your continued commitment to protecting children and strengthening the federal justice system.

Sincerely,

Board, NAAUSA

info@naausa.org

National Association of Assistant United States Attorneys