
NEWS RELEASE



Colorado Department of Law
Attorney General John W. Suthers



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 25, 2005

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL JOHN SUTHERS LAUNCHES
“THE ATTORNEY GENERAL’S SAFE SURFING INITIATIVE”**

**Internet Safety Program to Address Legislation and Educational Programs
to Keep Children Safe Online**

(DENVER) – In recognition of National Missing Children’s Day, Attorney General John W. Suthers today launched the *Attorney General’s Safe Surfing Initiative* in an effort to help keep children safe from online predators.

“Although today’s kids are savvy Internet users, many do not realize that each time they access the Internet, they are leaving an electronic footprint that can be traced by online predators,” said Attorney General John Suthers. “This initiative will help make Internet safety a statewide concern and give parents and teachers the tools to prevent children from becoming victims.”

The *Attorney General’s Safe Surfing Initiative* is a partnership between the Attorney General’s Office, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the Colorado Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs, and the Colorado Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force.

“The anonymity of the Internet, as well as instant access to countless of potential victims, has created incredible challenges for law enforcement who are on the front lines attempting to stop predators,” said Attorney General John Suthers. “Working with the Colorado Legislature, I will pursue an aggressive legislative agenda to help crack down on anyone who preys on our children over the Internet.”

The Attorney General announced a three-part legislative package to help further protect Colorado children from the dangers on the Internet, including 1) legislation to criminalize the use of the Internet to solicit a child for sexual activity, 2) making possession of large quantities of child pornography a felony, and 3) granting law enforcement subpoena power to obtain identifying information from Internet Service Providers.

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Sen. Paula Sandoval (D-Denver) and Rep. Bob McCluskey (R-Larimer) were on-hand for the announcement and pledged to work with Attorney General Suthers to sponsor the legislation.

In addition to his legislative package, Attorney General Suthers announced plans to travel Colorado this summer to host educational conferences about the dangers children face on the Internet.

“While these legislative changes will enhance our ability to catch online predators, prosecution is only half the battle,” said Attorney General Suthers. “Our best chance of protecting Colorado’s children is to teach them how to avoid becoming a victim in the first place.”

To help educate children about Internet safety, the Attorney General’s Office has partnered with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), and Boys & Girls Clubs of America. The Attorney General will use NCMEC’s “NetSmartz” program in presentations around the state. NetSmartz is available at: www.NetSmartz.org.

“We’re proud to partner with Attorney General Suthers in this important initiative to help increase awareness of the importance of teaching kids and teens Internet safety,” said Esther Cookson, a representative from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

John Arigoni, CEO and President of Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver, added, “Keeping kids safe is the highest priority of every Boys & Girls Club. We commend Attorney General Suthers for his leadership on this issue.”

According to a survey released earlier this week by NCMEC, thirty percent of parents do not know whether their children participate in chat rooms or instant messaging, and nearly half say they have never reviewed the content of what their kids type in these forums. Chat rooms and instant messaging are where most online victimization occurs.

Additional information on the *Attorney General’s Safe Surfing Initiative* and ways to help protect children from Internet crime can be found at the Attorney General’s homepage: <http://www.ago.state.co.us>.

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