



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Contact: Rep. Joel Kleefisch

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(888) 534-0038

## **Saving Your Children from Online Predators**

It is every parents' worst nightmare: finding out that your 13-year old daughter has disappeared from the home. Vanished, without a trace. Four excruciating days later, they would hear the news that the FBI found their daughter, five hours away in a different state. After being deceptively lured and groomed online by a predator, this man then did some horrific things to her. This girl was Alicia Kozakiewicz.

Fortunately, the FBI had received a tip related to the internet provider (IP) address of the perpetrator, who posted photos of Alicia online. This internet address led them to the home of the kidnapper, allowing the FBI to rescue Alicia and arrest the pedophile, locking him up in prison. Alicia now travels the country, working to help prevent and stop this terrible thing from happening to countless other boys and girls.

Similar to Alicia's case, the internet contains countless videos and images of child victims online. Law enforcement strongly believes that, in many cases, those posting and sharing photos and videos online are hands-on offenders, meaning that they are harboring and victimizing a child. According to Attorney General Schimel, our state's Department of Justice (DOJ) can often trace the persons who are trading, buying, selling, and possessing child pornography. However, this type of work can often be expensive and labor intensive.

To better help DOJ track down these offenders, this legislative session, I authored Assembly Bill 666, a bill known as Alicia's law that gives \$1 million in existing state funds to a new appropriation that may be used for criminal investigative operations and law enforcement related to Internet crimes against children.

When tracking down these criminals, time is of the essence. Unfortunately, the procedure for gaining the necessary information required to achieve a probable cause warrant slowed the process down so much that the child being saved in a timely manner is risked while law enforcement tried to trace IP addresses and link those addresses to individuals so they can serve a warrant.

To help, our bill also authorizes the Attorney General to issue an administrative subpoena to obtain information about an Internet customer or subscriber if that information is related to an investigation of an Internet crime against a child and if the Attorney General has reasonable cause to believe that an Internet or electronic service account has been used in the crime. The bill was signed into law this session, and it is already giving law enforcement and prosecutors the tools they need to catch these criminals.

DOJ gives the following tips to parents in helping their children avoid online predators: It is always a good idea to research the social networking sites and apps that everyone in your household are using. It is equally as important to talk with your children about potential risks and safety measures. Help them understand that all items posted can be viewed by others, including college admissions offices, parents, and potential predators. Talk with your children about their online activity, including the information they are posting about themselves, the websites they are visiting, the people they are communicating with, and any situations that make them feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused. It is also a good idea to know your child's passwords, screen names, and account information.

For these and many other tips and resources related to online safety for children, feel free to visit DOJ's website at [www.doj.state.wi.us/dci/icac/online-safety-tips-parents](http://www.doj.state.wi.us/dci/icac/online-safety-tips-parents). Also at this website, DOJ has a first-of-its-kind podcast, called the Protect Kids Online podcast. The podcast gives parents, caregivers, and grandparents tips to help children stay safe cyber safe.

*Rep. Joel Kleefisch can be reached at P.O. Box 8952, Madison, WI 53702-8952,  
or by calling toll-free 1 (888) 534-0038, or by email at  
[Rep.Kleefisch@legis.wi.gov](mailto:Rep.Kleefisch@legis.wi.gov)*