



Office of Representative Heath Shuler

Representing North Carolina's Eleventh Congressional District

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Rep. Shuler Joins Bipartisan Group to Introduce PROTECT Act

Washington, D.C. – Representative Heath Shuler announced the introduction of the PROTECT Our Children Act of 2007, H.R. 3845, with members of both parties and Mary and Alicia Kozakiewicz. The PROTECT (Providing Resources Officers and Technology to Eradicate Cyber Threats to our children) Act takes strong steps forward to prevent the exploitation of children on the Internet.

Alicia Kozakiewicz was lured from her home in Pennsylvania at the age of 13 by an online child predator. Local and federal law enforcement officials worked together and were able to rescue her from the predator's home in Virginia.

The bill will authorize the largest increase ever in funding for state and local law enforcement agencies to investigate child exploitation, through the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) task force program. Expanding the ICAC program will build state and local capacity and also modernize the way U.S. law enforcement at every level investigate crimes against children.

“Our children are our most precious resource. They are our future, and we must do all we can to protect them from those who would do them harm,” said Rep. Shuler. “There are thousands of predators online right now trolling the Internet looking for a child to harm. The tools are available to find these monsters and put them behind bars. Now, Congress must provide law enforcement personnel the resources they need to stop these criminals.”

New investigative techniques have allowed law enforcement to identify nearly 500,000 individuals trafficking child pornography over the Internet. However, due to the lack of resources at the Federal, state and local level, only 2% of the known offenders are investigated.

Companion legislation has been introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senator Joe Biden (DE) and Senator Barbara Boxer (CA).

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