



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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Kind Cosponsors Legislation to Combat Internet Crime

Washington, DC – In an effort to combat the growing problem of Internet-based crime, such as online child solicitation and identity theft, Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) has cosponsored legislation that will help families in western Wisconsin protect themselves from cyber criminals.

The Safeguarding America's Families by Enhancing and Reorganizing New and Efficient Technologies (SAFER NET) Act was introduced in the House of Representatives Tuesday, and will work to streamline and improve existing efforts to educate families and consumers on Internet safety.

"The internet can act as an incredible educational tool for kids – allowing them access to endless information and opportunities," Rep. Kind said. "But with it also comes potential dangers; sexual predators use the Internet to find their child victims, and many of the things found online may threaten an innocent child. This bill will create a parent's one-stop shop for information on how to protect their children and themselves from internet crimes."

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of households with internet access has more than doubled in the United States between 1998 and 2003. And according to the U.S. Department of Justice, one in five children between ages 10 and 17 is now sexually solicited online. Individuals looking for potential child victims often frequent youth-focused chat rooms and Web sites to communicate with children who unwittingly divulge personal information.

Despite the efforts of a host of organizations to provide information on how to protect against internet crimes, the vast majority of resources are unknown to most Americans. The SAFER NET Act would coordinate a national response to online threats and promote internet safety by streamlining existing public and private resources across the country.

The bill would:

- Create a new *Office of Internet Safety and Public Awareness* at the Federal Trade Commission responsible for improving public awareness and education about Internet safety. This office would be the one-stop shop on Internet safety resources for consumers, industry, and other internet safety initiatives. It would also work with all levels of government and organizations to reduce redundancy and promote best practices for promoting and ensuring internet safety.

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- Launch a national public awareness campaign to educate Americans about online threats and how best to protect themselves and their families from being the victims of online predators, financial schemes, ID theft, and more.
- Provide grants for internet safety programs to schools, non-profit organizations, state and local governments, law enforcement agencies, and businesses.

“The Internet is playing an increasingly large roll in our everyday lives, from banking to shopping to connecting with family and friends,” Rep. Kind said. “As our use of the Internet increases, so do the potential risks of being victimized by identity theft or worse. The SAFER NET Act will bring greater awareness to this growing issue, and help families protect their kids, and their personal information.”