

Subcommittee on Crime and Counterterrorism

Subcommittee Hearing: *Lost and Exploited: Confronting Child Trafficking and the Failure to Protect America's Most Vulnerable*

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Prepared Statement for the United States Senate Judiciary Committee

Chair, Ranking Member, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the incredibly difficult, but important, opportunity to testify today. For decades, I have been known not by my own name, but as the mother of a “child sexual abuse material”—CSAM—victim. She is revictimized every day. I am here on behalf of my daughter, her sibling, and the countless children whose suffering is often unseen, but never ends.

Shortly after my daughter was born, my ex-husband started sexually abusing her. He documented and memorialized this horrific abuse by taking photographs and sharing them online with other offenders. My daughter was an infant when the abuse began. She could not speak. She could not tell me what was happening to her. There were no visible injuries and no behaviors that raised concern in a baby. The abuse continued for nearly four years before it was finally uncovered—not through a routine safeguard, but by an undercover detective who encountered her father in an online chat room used by offenders.

I have often been told, “She was a baby—she won’t remember.” That belief is wrong and dangerous. Abuse does not require hours. It takes seconds. And when those seconds are repeated, they accumulate into days, months, and years of harm that permanently alter a child’s life.

Like many parents, I trusted the person I lived with. Who would suspect that a father performing ordinary parental duties—changing a diaper or giving a bath—was using those moments to exploit his own child? I did not know. I only knew something felt deeply wrong. The time he spent on the computer and his behavior did sit right with me.

I did what every parent is expected to do: I took my daughter to her pediatrician. There were no physical signs of abuse. Given the tension in our home over my fears and suspicions, I also sought counseling. At the urging of my therapist, I contacted Child Protective Services. An investigation followed. The case was deemed *unfounded*. We were described as a “picture-perfect family.” The computer that prompted the report was never examined.

Two and a half years later, I learned the truth: my husband had sexually abused our daughter and distributed images of that abuse on the internet.

I do not say this to blame anyone. We need ever caseworker, doctors, and therapist to spot, prevent, and stop abuse. I say it to highlight a systemic failure. When concerns involve digital evidence, failing to examine devices can leave children unprotected. Better training, clearer protocols, and the authority to act decisively could have spared my daughter years of additional abuse.

Today, more than twenty-five years later, the harm has not ended. I receive notifications from the Department of Justice—now numbering in the tens of thousands—informing me that yet another offender has been found in possession of images documenting my daughter’s abuse. These notifications arrive because strangers across the country and around the world continue to trade, modify, and redistribute those images. Sometimes the images are altered slightly to evade detection; sometimes they are compiled into videos. These are only the cases that are discovered and prosecuted federally. We do not know how many more remain unseen.

The man who abused my daughter served a sentence and has returned to society with limited restrictions. Pedophilia is a compulsion without a cure. Punishment alone does not guarantee prevention. Many of the offenders identified in the endless notifications are repeat offenders. CSAM exists on every type of device and across every platform. It is not confined to one technology, and it will not be solved by half measures or regulatory tweaks.

While every offender’s sentence has an end date, my family’s do not. My daughter, her sibling, and I live with the consequences every day. Retelling this story is painful, but remaining silent is not an option. If survivors and parents do not speak, the urgency fades, and children continue to be harmed.

I am one person telling one family’s story, but this is sadly not a rare tragedy. Given ever-expanding technology, now driven by artificial intelligence, every child risks becoming a CSAM victim. These children are our future. What happens to them shapes who we become as a society.

I urge Congress to act with the seriousness this crisis demands: invest in specialized training for law enforcement and child-protection professionals; ensure thorough digital investigations; expand access to trauma-informed therapy for victims; strengthen monitoring, treatment, and restrictions for offenders; and move legislation to protect victims forward without delay. Every delay leaves more children unprotected.

We may not be able to erase every image that exists, but we can stop the spread, we can interrupt the cycle, we can interfere with demand. We all have to start somewhere.

On behalf of my daughter, her sibling, and our family, thank you for listening and for your commitment to protecting America's most vulnerable children. I hope the actions you take will spare others from enduring what we have lived with for more than twenty-five years.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe