TESTIMONY BEFORE THE U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME AND COUNTERTERRORISM

Roblox and Online Gaming: Digital Playgrounds Endangering America's Children
November 17, 2026

Michael Schlep
Submitted November 16, 2026

Chairman Hawley, Ranking Member Durbin, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee:

My name is Michael Schlep. Thank you for allowing me to share my story with you. Growing up, making friends wasn't easy. I was homeschooled. I didn't have the same opportunities to meet other kids that many children my age did. So, when I discovered Roblox, I was excited. I could play games, meet people, and feel like I belonged. My parents were careful about what they allowed me to play online. They thought Roblox was a safe, educational game designed for children. That's literally how it was marketed. And at 8 years old, I had no reason to think otherwise.

What none of us understood was the moment I created that Roblox account, I was opening myself up to strangers around the world.I went on Roblox looking for friendship. I had no idea that the same platform I trusted to help me find it could also put me in danger.

My Robox Abuser

A few years later, when I was around 12 years old, a Roblox user invited me to an official Roblox chat room where I met a famous game developer named Kevin who went by the Roblox username "Ripull." Kevin took an interest in my passion for game development and began helping me make my own games. At the time, I saw him as an internet celebrity who appreciated my talent for game development and was taking me under his wing.

Kevin, who was an adult, began to groom me. Over time, our communication moved from public spaces to private conversations. He positioned himself as someone I could trust, encouraging me to share my most vulnerable thoughts while sharing his own. He even asked me to meet in person. Thankfully, I refused, but keeping my distance physically didn't protect me from what he would do next.

Kevin used his influence as a game developer on Roblox to manipulate and coerce me. He made me feel special by allowing me to work on his games, eventually making me a "community manager" of his games. I came to later learn he was giving me important roles on his Roblox games to make me go along with his abuse. Kevin exposed me to increasingly disturbing content in our online communications, including BDSM and gay pornography, cartel beheadings, mass shooting videos, and extreme racist ideologies. As one example, he sent me a video of the 2019 Christ Church mass shooting and tried to convince me that the innocent people who died that day deserved it because of the color of their skin. He also showed me photos of other victims of his online abuse, including photos of a girl sticking a pin through her hand. I told Kevin to stop sending me these things, he ignored my pleas, and the abuse escalated..

He started extorting me and publicly sharing the personal things I had confided in him, things he

knew were embarrassing and humiliating. He knew my real identity. I felt trapped. I didn't know how to handle it.

Kevin was influential on Roblox. The company even produced an official toy of his avatar, sold in stores across the country. I would see his face in the toy aisle at Walmart. While watching cartoons on TV, Roblox commercials would come on and show his avatar, constantly reminding me how much power, credibility, and influence my abuser had.

The torment culminated in a suicide attempt. My mom had me admitted to a psychiatric hospital. She later contacted Roblox seeking help and received nothing more than an auto-written response directing her to the suicide hotline.

Learning about the Widespread Predator Problem

Despite my trauma, I ended up returning to Roblox because that was my social community. I wanted to create a space where other kids wouldn't have to experience what I did. I started a YouTube channel centered around a Roblox game where you build and ride roller coasters, which eventually became successful enough for me to pursue full-time content creation. But as my platform grew, fans of my channel began contacting me, asking for help dealing with their own Roblox predators. I realized what happened to me wasn't an isolated incident, but part of a much larger systemic problem.

While I was learning more about children meeting predators on Roblox and being groomed, I simultaneously watched Roblox try to silence whistleblowers who raised awareness of the predator problem on its platform. One of the breaking points for me came when I saw Roblox file a $1.6 million lawsuit against Benjamin Simon, one of its most outspoken critics on child safety. Over time, I became increasingly shocked and hurt to see that Roblox was more concerned with stopping people from pointing out their predator problem than stopping predators targeting their own users – kids.

I was a content creator promoting the platform and felt like I couldn't just stand by and be silent. That's when I started my current main YouTube channel, "Schlep", which I dedicated to raising awareness of the predators on the platform.

Schlep

When I started to investigate the platform more closely, the things I uncovered were shocking. And the scale of the predator problem was far greater than I had initially thought. Roblox had been telling parents since the beginning that their game was kid friendly and heavily moderated, yet I was regularly finding predators, sexting groups, porn games, and even child sexual abuse material (CSAM) rings. Roblox was profiting off the content since this material was being bought and sold with the platform's own currency, Robux.

After confronting several predators in-game, I was introduced to a real-life predator catching group that has over 400+ convictions across the country. Their decoys taught me how to safely and legally identify and report predators. It didn't take long for me to find a Roblox game developer who tried sending nudes to an underage user. After confronting the predator online, I arranged a meetup between him and the predator catching organization, where he admitted to possessing videos of babies being sexually abused. The police were called, and he was charged

with 3 counts of child sexual abuse material. It was a relief to learn that he's now been convicted and placed on the sex offender registry.

This catch meant more to me than just getting someone arrested. By taking this monster off the streets, we stopped him from abusing more kids in the same way I was abused when I was a child. There are likely many other victims of this man, who hopefully can take some comfort in knowing he was eventually punished for his abuse.

I reported predators to Roblox and received generic responses telling me to block the predators I identified. I felt obligated to step up and do more to try to protect children from being subjected to the same predatory abuse and extortion I experienced. In a way it was how I coped with and tried to heal from the trauma I experienced.

In the span of the next 10 months, I would catch six predators using Roblox to target kids. After some of our arrests, I would receive emails from children saying things like "you got my groomer arrested." One of the predators even admitted to me that he had groomed hundreds of children through Roblox.

I reported predators to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) and law enforcement. The evidence provided led to four of those predators being convicted of their crimes, with other criminal investigations and charges ongoing. One perpetrator was sentenced to five years in prison. Yet despite this evidence being sufficient for prosecutors to bring criminal cases, requiring a high standard of proof to convict, time and time again I witnessed Roblox take little to know action, regularly failing to even ban the accounts of predators they were informed of. On some occasions predators were banned, but only after my videos exposing the predators went live and garnered attention they could not ignore.

I pleaded with the company to give me a line for reporting predators privately, since their standard reporting system was clearly ineffective. I made physical binders and mailed them to Roblox's headquarters. I was happy to help the company privately.

Roblox Threatened and Intimidated me and my Family

Rather than offer me a meeting, an opportunity to share my findings, or even a job to help them, Roblox threatened me. On August 8th, I received a cease-and-desist letter from Roblox, informing me that every account I owned would be terminated, including the account I used to make family-friendly gaming videos which had nothing to do with the child predator arrests. They also threatened to sue me for computer fraud if I ever accessed their website again.

My family and I were afraid. At the same time, I didn't want to give up on exposing the predator problem. I felt like I had made a difference, but there was so much more that had to be done and not enough people paying attention.

When I publicized Roblox's threatening letter on my YouTube channel, Roblox sought to vilify me. Roblox's chief safety officer Matt Kaufman compared me to child predators. I was hurt to see that I was being painted in the same light as my abuser, all because I didn't want kids to go through what I went through. My parents became increasingly concerned, they are not lawyers and didn't know what to do. My family hired the law firm Gould Grieco & Hensley to help

protect us.
Suddenly, I found myself in the middle of something bigger. Shortly after the public became aware of Roblox's attempts to intimidate and threaten me, the Attorney General of Louisiana announced she was bringing a lawsuit against Roblox, and many other states have filed since. My story is referred to in many of those lawsuits, citing in part Roblox's history of failing to protect children.

Roblox must be held publicly accountable for targeting and profiting off the abuse of children. Roblox will not voluntarily protect children; law enforcement, Congress, and state legislatures must act. Hundreds of families have filed civil cases against Roblox for the tragic abuse and trauma the platform has inflicted, but, unsurprisingly, Roblox is now trying to force the children whose abuse it facilitated out of court and into a secret and rigged forced arbitration system. They must be stopped and these families must be empowered to seek accountability in court.

Thank you, and I stand ready to support this committee in stopping online platforms from enabling and profiting off the abuse of children.