

Honorable Senator Harry Reid
United States Senate
Fax: 202-224-7327

Honorable Senator Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
Fax: (202) 224-2499



Samantha Runnion
July 26, 1996—July 15, 2002

Erin D. Runnion
Mother of Samantha Runnion
PO Box 10806
Westminster CA 92685
Phone: 714-642-3301
Erunnion@yahoo.com

July 15, 2008

Dear Senator Reid and Senator McConnell:

I know that you both have supported non-profit organizations who work to recover missing children. One would think that your interest in rescuing missing children would dictate that you also fund the law enforcement necessary to investigate and prosecute child exploitation cases that have proven to result in the rescue of countless more child victims. Sadly, it appears S.1738, The Combating Child Exploitation Act, is not a priority for your colleagues and that the Senate is more apt to protect its partisan politics than America's children. As respective party leaders I am begging you to recognize that the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Taskforces are our best chance to truly impact this cause. The ICAC Taskforces have proven that they can locate the worst of the worst peddlers in child pornography, rescue child victims in nearly 30% of their cases and walk away with a 96% conviction rate. If there are US Senators who believe 43cents per American, per year, is too high a price to pay for rescuing child victims and aggressively combating this issue, the American people deserve to know who they are.

Today is the sixth anniversary of the day my five-year old daughter, Samantha, was kidnapped. She was found the next day, over seventy miles away, having been sexually assaulted and asphyxiated. For six years I have spent most of my time thinking about these awful crimes against children and how we can effectively address this problem. I have imagined in agonizing detail every possible scenario of the fear, trauma, pain, confusion, anger and sadness that my little girl experienced in her last hours. I have come to realize that what happened to her is an extreme case of the frightfully pandemic problem of child sexual abuse. I have received countless stories of survivors who remind me that Samantha's suffering is that of tens of thousands of children in America right now. I have learned of the many ways our society and the judicial processes fail child victims and perpetuate the problem. I have dedicated Samantha's Foundation, The Joyful Child, to preventing these crimes against children by empowering parents and children with realistic options and skills to avoid deter and if necessary, escape a predator. Last year I helped form The Surviving Parents Coalition to empower parents who have suffered similarly to effect positive change to protect America's families from predators. Today, I am begging you to hear the screams of our children and help us in the fight to protect them. I can attest to the fact that there can be no greater expense than a child's life.

Sincerely,

Erin D. Runnion