



**STATEMENT OF**  
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**on January 31, 2008**  
**NEW YORK STATE SENATE CODES COMMITTEE**

## **Introduction**

Mr. Chairmen, Members of the Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to discuss the issue of the exploitation of children in the internet and the overall issue of child online safety.

My name is Alan Vazquez and as AeA's Manager & Counsel of Domestic Policy I have the responsibility for implementing AeA's domestic policy initiatives throughout the country. By way of background, AeA is the nation's largest high-tech trade association representing over 1.8 million high-tech workers in more than 2,500 IT sector companies across the country. Our member companies span the high-technology spectrum, from software, semiconductors, medical devices and computers to Internet technology, advanced electronics and telecommunications systems and services.

On behalf of the high-tech industry, AeA (American Electronics Association) would like to express our thoughts about Child Online Safety. Our member companies care deeply about protecting our children on the Internet and they devote significant resources to ensuring a safe online environment for all users – particularly children.

We believe that there is no single solution for best protecting children online. Rather online safety requires a multi-faceted approach involving ever evolving technology, public education and partnerships with law enforcement and other groups to keep the Internet safe for children. In general, we recommend increasing resources to provide new and more effective tools for law enforcement officials and creating new innovative ways to increase the awareness of parents and children to the dangers that currently exist online. However, most importantly to better protect New York children there must be a positive partnership between the technology sector and New York State officials.

### *Education*

One of the most effective ways to ensure that children do not become victims of cyber crimes is to make sure every school teaches its children a minimum set of prevention methods in all areas of cyber awareness. Creating school internet safety policies will help children recognize, respond to, and report dangerous situations they may come across while online. In the past, schools have led the charge to educate our youth on ways to protect themselves from threats they may come across in their neighborhood, like "don't talk to strangers" or "just say no." Once again, schools must take the lead to educate our children. In an age where students are being encouraged to use the Internet for education purposes, learning how to properly, safely, and securely use the Internet is critical if students are to reap its benefits.

Educating children on the dangers they could face on the internet is not sufficient by itself. New York parents must also be sufficiently informed of the dangers posed to children. AeA believes that there needs to be outreach to parents to better communicate and inform them of the tools available to protect their children online. Overall, there needs to be campaigns to educate both parents and children on how to effectively use the Internet as a tool and avoid the dangers that unfortunately lurk on the World Wide Web.

### *Law Enforcement*

While education can make a lot of headway in offsetting the potential threats that children could face online, there still needs to be a strong law enforcement component in protecting children. AeA believes that New York State needs to increase the level of funding to law enforcement officials in order to more effectively combat cyber crimes and protect New York children. Currently, according to the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/ Laboratory Accreditation Board, there are only two accredited digital forensic labs in New York State. One in Syracuse and the other in Hawthorne. The ASCLD/LAB is an organization that offers voluntary programs in which any crime laboratory may participate to demonstrate that its management, personnel, operational and technical procedures, equipment and physical facilities meet established standards. Despite the best efforts of the New York Police Department to serve and protect New York children to the ever evolving online threats, without the adequate resources they will not be able to effectively combat online predators. We urge New York State Legislatures to make a pledge to increase funding to the New York Police Department and provide them with the most effective tools and resources so that they can combat online predators.

### *Industry Response*

The high-tech industry understands that we are also responsible for ensuring that children do not become victims of cyber crimes. As a result, our industry has implemented technical solutions like parental controls, worked with non-profit organizations, and with law enforcement officials to best protect children.

There are already technical solutions in place that help parents and children make sure their experiences on the Internet are safe and fun. For example, parental controls allow parents to manage exactly what their children do on their computers, from what games they can play to which programs they can use, and which Web sites they can visit. Additionally, parents can set age-appropriate limits for each child in the family.

Additionally, high-tech companies work closely with industry groups to develop sound practices for reporting suspected child pornography to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). These companies also participate in Amber Alerts and support other NCMEC activities related to missing kids. Outside of NCMEC, many high-tech companies sponsor groups like Web Wise Kids and iKeepSafe among others. All of these groups provide their expertise in teaching children, parents, and the community as a whole on how to be safe on the internet.

Furthermore, AeA companies work closely with law enforcement officials to support the success of child exploitation investigations by working with law enforcement officials on the investigation and prosecution that follows. Also, our companies collaborate with law enforcement officials in order to help educate them about ways to combat cyber crimes. The

high-tech sector will continue to work together with law enforcement officials to promote child online safety.

Ladies and gentlemen, we face a complex issue here. As the Internet continues to develop and our kids discover newer and cooler Web sites where they can be entertained, how do we all continue to protect them like we would want to protect them if they were playing at a playground? It is a tough answer but we have provided evidence that there are very effective tools being put into place by this industry that will help us with such an important task. We appreciate the efforts of you and your colleagues to address this important issue. Now, is the time to work together and not legislate technical solutions that do not exist

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