

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 4, 2011

Hon. Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear General Holder:

We write to urge the Department of Justice vigorously to enforce federal obscenity laws against major commercial distributors of hardcore adult pornography. To that end, we urge you to direct that the FBI and U.S. Attorneys work together to combat the growing scourge of obscenity in America.

In June 1998, when you served as Deputy Attorney General, you directed U.S. Attorneys to enforce these laws. The need for consistent and vigorous enforcement is even greater today because both obscene pornography and evidence of its harms have multiplied since then. Laws exist to respond to this crisis, but they need to be enforced.

Last June, an important briefing in the Capitol outlined how pornography has changed, becoming more harmful, addictive, and available, and linked to other crimes. Researchers, scholars, and other experts explained, for example, how today's hardcore pornography is typified by extreme violence against women and how pornography consumption can contribute to sexual harassment and sexual violence. Another expert warned that Internet adult pornography normalizes sexual harm to children, while another addressed the growing connection between pornography and sex trafficking. You should also be aware that the next version of the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual will include a disorder that encompasses pornography addiction.

Simply put, we know more than ever how illegal adult obscenity contributes to violence against women, addiction, harm to children, and sex trafficking. This material harms individuals, families, and communities and the problems are only getting worse. We urge you to study the evidence gathered in such sources as www.pornographyharms.com to more fully understand the crisis and the urgent need for enforcement.

As you know, adult obscenity is not protected by the First Amendment. Congress has for decades passed laws seeking to curb the production and distribution of obscene pornography, including on the Internet. A consistent and strong commitment to enforcing these laws can have a significant impact.

We believe it is imperative that the Department, with cooperation by the FBI, investigate and prosecute all major producers and distributors of adult obscenity. We need your leadership.

Sincerely,


Charles Grassley


Orrin G. Hatch

Hon. Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Page Two
April 4, 2011


Michael S. Lee



Tom Coburn


Jon Kyl



John Cornyn


Lindsey Graham


Olympia Snowe


John McCain


Roger Wicker



Saxby Chambliss


Mike Johanns


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Kay Bailey Hutchison


Jerry Moran


Bob Corker


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Hon. Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Page Three
April 4, 2011



Dan Coats



Bill Nelson



Roy Blunt



Johnny Isakson



Joe Lieberman



Kelly Ayotte



Thad Cochran



Ron Johnson



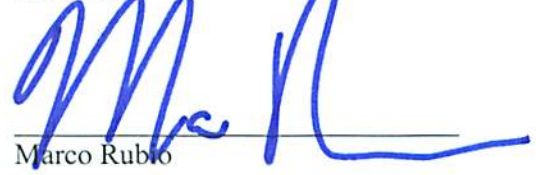
Mark Kirk



Tom Carper



Mike Enzi



Marco Rubio



E. Benjamin Nelson



John Hoeven



James Risch



Richard Burr



Mitch McConnell



Jim DeMint

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Hon. Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Page Four
April 4, 2011



John Thune



Mark L. Pryor



Lamar Alexander



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Dianne Feinstein



Amy Klobuchar