

CANADA FAMILY ACTION COALITION

AIM FOR GOLD IN PROTECTING KIDS FROM PEDOPHILES

Nation-wide grassroots lobby demands tougher laws for internet sex crimes against children

Ottawa, Ontario – March 10, 2010 – Canada Family Action (CFA) has launched a nation-wide political action campaign to demand tougher laws to protect kids, deter pedophiles and achieve justice for victims of internet child sex crimes.

“Canada won 14 gold medals at the Olympics, but CFA wants our country to be on top of the podium as a global winner for protecting kids from pedophiles,” says Brian Rushfeldt, CFA Executive Director. “Right now, Canada wouldn’t even make the qualifying round.”

Charges for distribution and production of child sex images increased 800% between 1998 and 2003 and the number of internet child sex images quadrupled, according to a June 2009 report by the Ombudsman for Victims of Crime. Most of those images are of children between the ages of 3 and 8.

Canadian law lags far behind some other nations in protecting kids and deterring pedophiles, Rushfeldt says. Section 163 minimum sentences for child pornography crimes range from 14 days for possession to 90 days for production and distribution. “Weaknesses in our criminal code, and the failure of judges to mete out justice, contribute to Canada’s reputation as a safe haven for pedophiles and our second place finish for hosting child sex sites,” says Rushfeldt.

CFA has already received requests for nearly 300,000 of its brochures from citizens demanding change and almost 30,000 signatures have been received on petitions. “Our goal is that hundreds of thousands of Canadian citizens who value children and care about justice will contact their MP and request the government take immediate action to protect kids”, said Nathan Cooper of CFA. CFA wants the Criminal Code term ‘child pornography’ replaced with ‘child sex abuse images’; we want mandatory minimum sentences of 10 years for those who produce child sex images, and we want legislation requiring all citizens including ISPs to report known sex images and sites.”

Rushfeldt said the “Child Safe Nation” brochure is sparking anger and disgust in Canadians who are shocked by the weak laws and lax sentencing by judges. “Some callers to talk radio shows have said they will take matters into their own hands if judges fail to apply just sentences,” says Rushfeldt. “Liberal judges need to rethink what justice means and they need sensitivity training on this issue. Defenseless children are lifelong victims since internet images live forever.”

Charles McVety, President of CFA said: “CFA is asking the government to make these changes to the criminal code a high priority in the 2010 sessions of Parliament. Canada’s children deserve protection and justice. It is unconscionable to continue to allow giant ISP corporations to distribute, with impunity, images of children being raped. Imagine the risk to our children with pedophiles viewing such material. If our elected officials do not protect our children then it begs the question, is there any good in having them?”