

## THE STUDENT INTERNET SAFETY ACT

Everyday children and teens alike rely on the internet for multiple resources. Whether it's research for a school project, visiting an online social network, or checking movie times for a local theater, our nation's youth remains increasingly active online and it is paramount that they are aware of the potential risks of online predators and know how to stay safe online.

While many parents continue to educate their children about the importance of online safety, this is an important message that our schools should have the ability to reinforce as well. Currently, school districts that receive grants under the Enhancing Education through Technology (Ed Tech) Program and the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program from the U.S. Department of Education may use the federal funds for a wide variety of authorized activities, such as drug and violence prevention activities, establishing and maintaining a school safety hotline, or developing, enhancing, or implementing information technology courses.

The Student Internet Safety Act would expand the list of authorized activities allow schools to develop and implement programs that promote the safe use of the Internet by students, such as programs that:

- educate students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with individuals on social networking Web sites and in chat rooms;
- protect students against online predators, cyberbullying, or unwanted exposure to inappropriate material; or
- promote involvement by parents in the use of the Internet by their children.

### According to a 2007 study by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children:

69% of teens regularly receive personal messages online from people they don't know.

31% of teens say they usually reply and chat with people they don't know.

64% post photos or videos of themselves, while 58% post info about where they live.

71% of teens have established online profiles, up from 61% in 2006.

19% of teens report they have been harassed or bullied online

Given the vital role the Internet plays in schools across the nation, the Student Internet Safety Act would give schools the ability to educate their students about staying safe in a rapidly growing online community. We teach our children how to look both ways before crossing the street; we also need to teach them the safety rules for the information superhighway.

### Community Support for the Student Internet Safety Act

*"The internet holds tremendous potential for our nation's youth. But we must educate young people about how to prevent online victimization so they may have safer experiences online."*

**Ernie Allen, President & CEO  
National Center for Missing & Exploited Children**

*"I applaud Congressman Adam Putnam's leadership and hard work regarding this important legislation. Educators, law enforcement, and parents have a solemn obligation to educate our children about the potential dangers of the Internet. All of us must take a proactive action to teach our kids how to stay safe online. This legislation takes important steps to make this happen. Nothing is more important to our communities' future than the safety and well being of our children."*

**Sheriff Grady Judd  
Polk County Sheriff's Office**

