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## **NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Wisconsin DOJ Provides Resources for Teens and Parents as Sextortion Cases Increase**

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force is providing resources for online safety with tips for talking to kids about safe online practices as sextortion cases increase throughout the country, including in Wisconsin.

Sextortion is a form of sexual exploitation where the offender receives sexually explicit material from the victim and then threatens to release the compromising material unless the victim sends money, gift cards, and/or additional sexual content, or engages in sexual activity. Children are particularly vulnerable to this type of crime. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) has seen a dramatic increase in online enticement, which is a broad category that includes sextortion cases, being reported to the CyberTipline. Financial sextortion, where the offender demands money from the person, is becoming more prevalent, and teenage boys have been the most common targets in these recent cases. Sextortion can have tragic consequences for victims including mental health crisis and suicide, although the data is not tracked nationally.

*If you or someone you know is in crisis, the National Suicide Hotline is 988. You can call or text to reach a mental health professional.*

In 2025 so far, the Wisconsin ICAC Task Force has received 103 cybertips related to sextortion. In 2024, the task force received 237 cybertips related to sextortion, up from 176 in 2023. These numbers do not include cases reported directly to local law enforcement agencies.

“Sextortion is a heinous crime targeting teens around the country,” said Attorney General Josh Kaul. “By learning how to help prevent this crime and how to respond effectively when it occurs, members of the public can help keep kids safe.”

### **Tips For Teens Who May Be Victims Of Sextortion**

- Remember, it’s not your fault!
- Even if you made a choice you regret, it’s never too late to get help.
- Tell a parent or trusted adult right away.
- Do not pay money or comply with the blackmailer’s requests.
- Report the account through the platform’s safety feature.
- Block the suspect, but DO NOT DELETE the messages or your profile.
- Report the crime to law enforcement or at [Report.CyberTip.org](https://www.reportcybertip.org).

### **What Can Parents/Guardians Do To Protect Their Kids?**

The following tips are informed by NetSmartz and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

- **Get Involved**
  - Actively participate in your children’s digital lives.
  - Regular check-ins about online interactions should be the norm.
  - Set online and offline behavioral expectations.
  - Remind your child that if they are a victim of sextortion, that you are a trusted adult and it is never too late to get help.
- **Talk about Relationships**
  - Have regular discussions about your family’s expectations and values regarding relationships. Discuss the characteristics of healthy relationships, such as having and respecting boundaries and practicing consent. Explain that both pressuring someone and being pressured into uncomfortable or unsafe sexual behaviors is not okay. Help children understand that they should never forward sexts they may receive from others, as limiting the image’s spread reduces the risk of it falling into dangerous hands.
- **Empower your Child**
  - Provide resources that your child can reach out to, such as [TakeItDown.NCMEC.org](https://www.TakeItDown.NCMEC.org) and [CyberTipline.org](https://www.CyberTipline.org).
  - Teach your child how to report someone.
  - Remind them that sextortion is a crime, it is not their fault and you are here to help them.

If you or someone you know has information on potential child exploitation, you can report it to NCMEC online at <https://report.cybertip.org/> or by calling 1-800-843-5678. Reports can also be made through Speak Up, Speak Out (SUSO), a 24/7 statewide confidential reporting system run by DOJ's Office of School Safety. Reports can be made online at <https://speakup.widj.gov/>, by calling 1-800-MY-SUSO-1, or by texting "SUSO" to 738477.

### **About The Wisconsin ICAC Task Force**

The Wisconsin ICAC Task Force offers a variety of services including, investigation and prosecution of offenders of internet crime, investigative and prosecutorial assistance for police agencies and prosecutors, victim services, training for law enforcement officers and prosecutors, and coordination of internet safety education for parents, teachers and community members. Visit the ICAC Task Force page for internet safety tips for parents and caregivers [here](#).