

Women ready to wage war on kiddie porn

By Joyce Price
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Leaders of Enough Is Enough — a grass-roots women's campaign against child pornography — know they're fighting an uphill battle.

But they say they can make a difference, pointing to the success of Mothers Against Drunk Driving as proof of what can be accomplished when women "unite behind a just cause."

"In only 11 years, [MADD members] not only strengthened the nation's laws governing drinking and driving, they totally changed the way we view drunk driving," Dee Jepsen, national campaign director of Enough Is Enough, wrote in a recent newsletter.

"If women work together, I know the same thing can happen in the campaign against hard-core, illegal pornography," Mrs. Jepsen wrote.

Launched last November, Enough Is Enough is a much newer movement than MADD, but its leaders say they have encountered "tremendously positive" response and strong growth.

"Women will make the difference on this issue, because children and women are the primary victims [of pornography]," said Sarah Blanken, founder of Enough Is Enough and vice president for women's leadership in the National Coalition Against Pornography.

"Our goal is to have 35,000 women involved by the end of this year," Mrs. Blanken said in an interview.

According to Mrs. Jepsen, the campaign is "working to mobilize hundreds of thousands, eventually millions, of women" in the fight against child pornography and other "hard-core, illegal" pornography.

Mrs. Blanken said the campaign needs large numbers because it can't match the financial resources of the pornography industry. "Pornography is an \$8-billion-to-\$10 billion-a-year industry. We're lucky if we have \$1 million to spend," she said.

The strategy of Enough Is Enough

is to first reach "women leaders... women of influence" at training seminars being held around the country, she said. An East Coast seminar will be held June 19 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Washington.

Women who attend the seminars review the legal status of adult and child pornography and learn what they can do to fight pornography locally and nationally, Mrs. Blanken said. They then are urged to educate others within their circle of influence, she said.

"We're trying to get women to understand how much power and influence they can have over the materials" that are marketed in their neighborhoods, Mrs. Blanken said.

Leaders of Enough Is Enough acknowledge that child pornography is not displayed on the shelves of local video stores or adult bookstores, noting that possession is illegal in most states.

Nevertheless, "it's a cottage industry" that's flourishing as a result of a "very strong network of pedophiles across the country," Mrs. Blanken said.

Ernest E. Allen, president of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, agreed.

He quoted the congressional testimony of Special Agent Ken Lanning of the FBI's Behavioral Sciences Unit: "Child pornography exists primarily for the consumption of pedophiles. If there were no pedophiles, there would be little child pornography."

Child pornography and child molestation are closely linked, Mr. Allen said. "Virtually all the offenders photograph or videotape" the children they abuse, he said.

"And child pornography [tapes and pictures] are literally being traded like baseball cards. And it's used as a means of accessing kids," he said.

The Prince George's County search for Junior Burdyski, a 10-year-old Brentwood boy missing since May 24, has uncovered a child-pornography ring with links to Costa

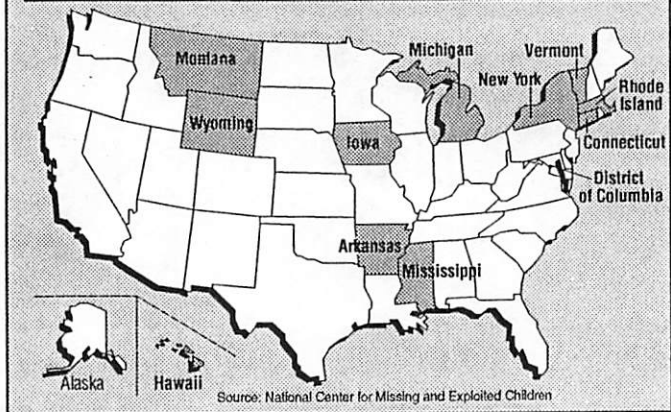
KEY GOALS

The Enough Is Enough campaign

1. Strengthen child pornography laws in all 50 states so that they uniformly:
 - Prohibit "mere possession" of child pornography.
 - Set a uniform age of majority of 18 years.
 - Give felony status for all child pornography offenses.
 - Set mandatory minimum jail sentences with lengthy probationary periods.
 - Are strictly enforced and supported.
2. Strengthen federal legislation against child pornography.
3. Create a national registry of convicted sex offenders.
4. Eliminate dial-a-porn access for children.
5. Remove hard-core pornography from neighborhood video stores.
6. End pay-per-view rentals of pornographic movies at hotels and motels.

BATTLEGROUND

Jurisdictions that do not outlaw the possession of child pornography



Source: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

The Washington Times

Rica and has led to the arrest of at least two suspected pedophiles.

A study by the National Institute of Mental Health found that the average pedophile begins molesting children at age 15 and has an average of 117 victims, Mr. Allen said.

He said the missing children center is "enthusiastic and supportive" of the efforts of Enough Is Enough to "eliminate the victimization of children and the scourge of child pornography."

Because it's difficult to purchase child pornography over the counter, many Americans wrongly believe the "war against child pornography is over," Mr. Allen said.

The furtive nature of child pornography has prompted Enough Is Enough to focus its efforts on strengthening state laws against obscenity and making them uniform.

"We want the age of majority to be the same in all states, and we want it to be 18 years," Mrs. Blanken said. "In California, the age of majority is 14, which means you can't prosecute for child pornography if it involves a

14-year-old."

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and Enough Is Enough are pushing to make the mere possession of child pornography a criminal offense.

Both also are pushing for passage of the so-called Oprah Winfrey Bill, which would establish a national registry of convicted sex offenders.

Miss Winfrey, a popular TV talk show host, has disclosed she was physically and sexually abused as a child.

Currently, 23 states have sex-offender registries, Mr. Allen said.

California has had such a registry since 1947. Mr. Allen said he examined it about a year ago and gained interesting information about the type of offenders listed on it.

"I found out that there were 61,000 convicted sex offenders in the [California registry] database, and that 61 percent of those offenders had victimized only children," Mr. Allen said. "And there was another 18 percent in that who had victimized both kids and adults."