

**Testimony of the Honorable Frank J. Mrvan
U.S. Representative, IN-01**

**House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies**

**May 18, 2021 – 12:30 PM
Member Day Hearing**

I would like to thank Chairwoman DeLauro, Ranking Member Cole, and all the members of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee for holding today's hearing.

My primary purpose for testifying today is to urge the Subcommittee to provide \$10 million for the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Injury Prevention and Control for child sexual-abuse prevention research activities in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022.

Specifically, the CDC estimates that one in four girls and one in 13 boys will become victims of child sexual abuse. This traumatic experience is associated with long-term physical and mental-health issues, impacting how children think, feel, and act over their lifetime. Regrettably, a 2020 report by INTERPOL found that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the frequency of child sexual abuse and the consumption of online child sexual-abuse materials. Further, the pandemic has provided abuser's additional access to victims while inhibiting children's ability to access victim services to report their abuse and receive treatment.

I believe that increasing funding for child sexual-abuse prevention research activities will be a crucial investment in the continued fight to protect our most vulnerable population. This research will be used to clarify the risk factors that promote offending and the protective factors that prevent offending. Most importantly, this research will be used to develop and disseminate effective prevention strategies to ensure that evidence-based intervention practices make it into the hands of parents, educators, youth-serving organizations, and other stakeholders dedicated to keeping children safe from sexual abuse.

I would add that prior to becoming a Member of Congress, I have been engaged in advocating for children and successfully led a coalition to enact a state law in Indiana that mandates educator and student training on how to detect sexual abuse. This initiative, called the No More Secrets campaign, has aimed to help our youth better understand and report the abuse they may experience, and I appreciate the opportunity to continue to be engaged in this issue by advocating today before this Subcommittee.

I am thankful for the demonstration of this Subcommittee's commitment to investing in research to eradicate child sexual abuse in recent fiscal years, and I respectfully encourage the Subcommittee to appropriate \$10 million to this vital program in FY 2022.

Thank you again to Chairwoman DeLauro, Ranking Member Cole, all Members of the Subcommittee, and the Subcommittee staff for your dedicated work and for holding this hearing.