

Chairman Serrano, Ranking Member Aderholt, and Members of the Subcommittee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today about several issues that are of vital importance to my community in Northeast Ohio. The first issue I would like to discuss is encouraging the Committee to fully fund initiatives that combat child exploitation. Last year, The New York Times published an investigative report detailing ways the federal government has failed to address the epidemic of child exploitation online - namely by failing to fully fund law enforcement. In 2019, technology companies reported over 69 million images and videos depicting abuse.

While law enforcement agencies have continuously expressed concerns about being understaffed and underfunded, evolving technologies have provided new tools to shield predators such as encryption techniques and anonymous platforms like the dark web. Law enforcement must have access to updated technology and adequate staffing resources to address this increasing criminal activity.

I want to thank the Committee for its leadership the last several years to increase funding in this area. It is clear though, that this crisis is at a breaking point. I request the Committee reaffirm Congress's commitment to combatting child exploitation as a law enforcement priority by increasing funding for Missing and Exploited Children programs to \$105 million in FY21.

The programs in this account include both the Internet Crimes Against Children, or "ICAC", Task Forces, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children or "NCMEC". ICACs are located throughout the country and tasked with responding to reports of child exploitation within their jurisdictions. Congress has

continuously underfunded the ICAC program, appropriating around half of the amount authorized. Facing mentally exhausting conditions and limited resources, these law enforcement officers need Congressional support.

NCMEC is the clearinghouse that intakes reports from tech companies about child exploitation on their platforms and directs the reports to the appropriate law enforcement jurisdiction. NCMEC plays a vital role by working with both the private industry and law enforcement to eradicate child exploitation material from the public sphere. It is the unfortunate truth that the volume of reports coming in to NCMEC is so vast, they do not have the resources to address them all. Increasing funding for the Missing and Exploited Children programs would empower ICAC and NCMEC to effectively combat the spread of child exploitation online.

The second initiative I would like to advocate for today is the STOP School Violence Grant program. These grants are distributed by the Department of Justice to states and localities. Grants are used to implement evidence-based prevention program training for school personnel and students to identify warning signs and prevent tragedies such as suicide and mental health crises.

Adequate funding for STOP School Violence Grants is essential to the safety of America's students. Every year, there are thousands of instances of suicides, assaults, bullying, and homicides that affect schools across the country. Research shows that students often display warning signs before taking any action, including telling someone of their plans. Our students, teachers, and staff need the tools to help them recognize these warning signs and take proactive steps towards improving the physical and mental wellbeing of our students.

I am urging the Committee to fund the STOP School Violence Grant program at level funding and to prioritize language that ensures all school districts have the resources to receive these grants. America's children deserve to learn and grow in safe environments, and the STOP School Violence program helps ensure that they are given this opportunity.

Finally, I would also like to speak in support of NASA's Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate, or "ARMD". The Administration's increased budget proposal for NASA funding shows a renewed commitment to innovative aeronautics research. The NASA ARMD program is an essential component in developing and advancing the aeronautics economy in Ohio and nationally, with civil aviation contributing over 5% to the GDP and supporting 10 million American jobs. NASA Glenn alone employs more than 3,000 scientists, engineers and technicians in Northeast Ohio.

I appreciate the Committee's work to secure additional funding in last year's appropriations package for NASA Aeronautics research. As you begin your important work on the FY21 CJS appropriations bill, I strongly urge you to fund NASA ARMD at \$830 million so that America can maintain and grow its commercial and strategic edge in aeronautics.

I appreciate the opportunity to make a statement today and look forward to working with the Committee to fund efforts that will keep our communities safe and support scientific innovation.