Jan 10, 2023

Contact Kylie Mason

Phone 850-245-0150

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Warning About Increase in Sextortion of Minors



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is warning Floridians about an alarming increase in sextortion targeting minors. Sextortion is a form of exploitation where victims, including children, are coerced into sharing explicit photos or videos of themselves. The predator will then use the images to blackmail the target with threats to publicly expose the material. Recently, the U.S. Department of Justice issued a startling warning about the increase in sextortion cases, including more than 3,000 minor victims in 2022.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Sextortion cases are on the rise nationwide and thousands of minors are being targeted and victimized. Parents and guardians, please talk to your children about this disturbing crime and make sure they know not to take or send explicit images to anyone. Keep an open dialog with your children and urge them to tell you if they are ever asked to exchange inappropriate content.”

The 2022 Human Trafficking Summit hosted a session on sextortion, with additional information on this crime and how parents and guardians can help children avoid being victimized. The session is called “Understanding the Dangers of Sextortion” and can be accessed here.

During the Summit, the Department of Children and Families provided these tips for parents and guardians to protect their children from sextortion, including:

- Be aware of a child’s online activity;
- Require children to make social media accounts private;

- Prevent children from altering or using a fake date of birth to access sites that allow for communication with older individuals;
- Explain that profiles may be altered online to appear as someone else;
- Clarify that once something is sent on the internet, it never goes away; and
- Ensure that children know how to ask for help, even if the situation is uncomfortable.

Last year, Attorney General Moody released an Online Safety Toolkit, designed to empower parents and guardians to teach their children about the dangers of human trafficking online and to create effective online safety plans for safe internet use. To view the Online Safety Toolkit, click here.

Any parent suspicious that their child may be targeted by a potential predator can call the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's CyberTipline at 1(800) 843-5678. Additionally, parents should report the case to a local FBI field office by calling 1(800) CALL-FBI, or online at Tips.FBI.gov. If a child is in immediate danger, contact local law enforcement by calling 911.