

Brady Introduces Legislation To Increase Online Protection For Children (6/02/04)

WASHINGTON

--- Congressman Robert A. Brady has introduced a bill that would prosecute those who lure children into sexually explicit or otherwise harmful Internet websites. The bill, H.R. 4305, The OnLine Child Safety Act, would amend an existing law passed last year.

"We all agree that parents have the primary responsibility of filtering the material that reaches children. However, children are often lured onto websites containing obscene material through the devious manipulation of search engines. In order to cultivate hits on websites, web proprietors often go to extremes to lure internet users through search engines. My legislation goes the next step to offer increased protection to children searching the web."

The bill would amend Chapter 110 of Title18, United States Code, Section 2252B and Section 2252C, Misleading Domain Names on the Internet. The legislation would insert "or meta tags" after "domain names."

The Congressman explained, "The current law targets those who use misleading domain names with the intent to deceive a minor into viewing harmful Internet material. But, I believe web proprietors who use misleading meta tags to target children via search engines should be held to the same standard under the law."

Meta tags are words placed in the metafile of a website, by the creator, to help attract web users to search engines. Typically, an individual or business will use meta tags as a way to better advertise what their web site is about. It also makes it easier for the web user to quickly find information during a web search.

Congressman Brady said that his intention is not to limit the rights of adults to pursue whatever form of entertainment they wish. "I simply wish to crack down on those who place childhood themes or misleading terms into the metafile of a harmful website with the intent to lure children," he stressed.