

The Texas Attorney General's Fugitive Unit Works to Keep Children Safe



By **Greg Abbott**
Attorney General of Texas

As a parent, I can think of no worse crimes than those committed against children. That is why protecting children from sexual predators is a top priority of my office. We place an emphasis on preventing these kinds of crimes, in part by policing the Internet chat rooms where predators hunt for their victims.

The Attorney General's Cyber Crimes Unit (CCU) is actively pursuing predatory pedophiles who use the Internet to develop relationships with children for the purpose of luring them to a meeting. Since May 2003, the CCU has arrested 53 men who solicited teens online for sex.

Prevention also includes making sure that felons adhere to the terms of their parole. Otherwise, they may repeat their heinous acts. That is why in August 2003 we launched the Fugitive Unit at the Office of the Attorney General.

The mission of the Fugitive Unit, is to locate, arrest and send back to prison convicted child predators who

have violated their parole. The Attorney General's Office is not targeting paroled offenders who abide by the law. To be a target of the Fugitive Unit, a person must be a child sex offender who has absconded from the law, violating the terms of their parole.

These felons have been given a second chance, something victims never have. Instead of abiding by the terms of their parole, they chose to run and hide. We have no sympathy for these criminals, and we will continue to find them and put them behind bars.

The Fugitive Unit has been highly successful. In just 14 months, the unit's hard work has led to the arrest of 162 fugitives. In fact, one of the unit's very first arrests was a sex offender who was watching children on a busy playground. I have no doubt our officers thwarted a child predator's ill intentions that day.

The reach of the Fugitive Unit extends far beyond Texas. We recently extradited fugitive parolee Ramon Cerillos from California for violating the terms of his parole.

In 1989, Cerillos was convicted of indecency with a child. In 1990, he was released and paroled. He disappeared in 1991 and had a parole

warrant issued for his arrest.

Thanks to excellent detective work by an officer and a crime analyst in the Fugitive Unit, we found out that Mr. Cerillos was living in Los Angeles. We contacted the Los Angeles Police Department for assistance. The LAPD confirmed his identity and arrested him, helping us bring this fugitive to justice.

Mr. Cerillos had been on the run for 13 years. He is now behind bars.

A large part of our success lies with the parole officers of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). They have been extremely supportive of our efforts. They provide us with the valuable information on parole violators that we need to do our work. We thank them for working with us to make our communities safer for our children.

We are very pleased that our efforts to date have been successful, but we will not rest on our laurels. Our work in removing child predator fugitives from our neighborhoods is ongoing. We must all remain vigilant and united in the protection of our children.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

Fugitive Child Predators

To view fugitive paroled child sex offenders, visit the Criminal Justice Section of The Office of the Attorney General's web site
www.oag.state.tx.us

These fugitives should be considered DANGEROUS!

NEVER attempt to apprehend a fugitive yourself.

If you have information on the location of any of these fugitives, contact TEXAS CRIME STOPPERS
24 hours a day
1-800-252-TIPS (8477)

You DO NOT have to give your name, and your information could earn you a CASH REWARD.

You can report child pornography online.

Contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
www.cybertipline.com



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Information on this and other topics is available on the Attorney General's Web site at www.oag.state.tx.us.