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State CyberCrime Investigators Arrest State Employee for Producing Child Pornography

TALLAHASSEE, FL - A joint investigation between the Attorney General's CyberCrime Unit, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the Tampa Police Department, the Department of Children and Families, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation has tonight led to the arrest of Al Zimmerman, an employee of the Department of Children and Families. Zimmerman was taken into custody and charged with eight counts of using a child in a sexual performance, a second-degree felony punishable by up to 15 years per count.

Investigators determined that at least two victims between the ages of 16 and 17 were solicited by Zimmerman to perform lewd acts, which were used by Zimmerman to create child pornography. The criminal investigation is ongoing and no additional information is available at this time. Zimmerman was booked into the Hillsborough County Jail.

Zimmerman was hired by the Department in March 2005. He most recently served as a Department spokesperson. He was terminated immediately.

Statement released by Attorney General Bill McCollum:

"Every photograph, every image, every lasting impression of a child's sexual abuse perpetuates this horrible crime over and over again. CyberCrime knows no boundaries, targets all demographics, and should never fail to galvanize us into action to protect our children from these predators."

Statement released by Florida Department of Law Enforcement Commissioner Gerald Bailey:

"Law enforcement has no tolerance for those who victimize our children. We appreciate the full cooperation of the Department of Children and Families and the close collaboration of local, state and federal law enforcement partners in this case."

Statement released by the Tampa Police Department:

Sergeant Mumford of the Tampa Police Department Child Abuse and Sex Crimes Unit released the following statement: "A cooperative effort on the part of all agencies involved has brought a successful conclusion to this investigation. We appreciate the assistance of all agencies involved."

Statement released by Department of Children and Families Secretary Bob Butterworth:

"The alleged actions of Mr. Zimmerman are a betrayal of trust to this Department, its employees, and the people we serve. We know the children and families of Florida rely on us to protect them, and in taking that responsibility, we pledge to keep them safe."

"I applaud the work of the Attorney General's CyberCrime Unit, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Tampa Police Department for their swift and thorough efforts to take action in this matter.

"In light of this incident, I am asking the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to work with the Department to conduct a thorough investigation to determine if any child in the state's care has been victimized. Mr. Zimmerman's alleged conduct is an egregious breach of the public trust and will not be tolerated. He has been terminated."

Zimmerman was taken into custody by authorities in Lakeland and will be transported to Hillsborough County to be booked into the Hillsborough County Jail. The probable cause affidavit and booking photo can be obtained from the Hillsborough County Orient Road Jail at (813) 247-8000. He will be prosecuted by the Attorney General's Office of Statewide Prosecution and faces up to 120 years in prison if convicted of all charges. The investigating agencies are all members of the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Forces.

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