

April 29, 2021

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL: CLARK COUNTY MAN PLEADS GUILTY, SENTENCED FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT OF A CHILD

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today announced a Clark County man was sentenced on Thursday to 36 years in prison for sexually assaulting a child.

John D. Pitts, 50, of Marshall, Illinois, was sentenced in Clark County Circuit Court after pleading guilty to one count of predatory criminal sexual assault of a child, a Class X felony.

"This sentence highlights the importance of the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force in holding individuals accountable who exploit and assault children," Raoul said. "These law enforcement partnerships are critical to offenders being identified and victims receiving the justice they deserve. I appreciate the support of the Clark County State's Attorney's office on this case and will continue to work with local law enforcement across Illinois to protect our most vulnerable from abuse."

Pitts was arrested in July 2021 after Raoul's investigators, along with the Marshall Police Department, conducted a search of Pitts' residence and found evidence of child pornography. The investigation later revealed Pitts had recorded himself repeatedly sexually assaulting a child.

The Attorney General's office prosecuted the case with Clark County State's Attorney Kyle Hutson's office.

"I would like to thank the Attorney General's office for their assistance in working with local law enforcement to ensure justice was delivered in this case," Hutson said. "Our residents are best served when law enforcement agencies at all levels of government work together to keep our communities safe."

The case is part of Attorney General Raoul's work to investigate and prosecute child pornographers in Illinois. Raoul's office, with a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, runs the [Illinois Internet Crimes Against Children \(ICAC\) Task Force](#) that investigates child exploitation crimes and trains law enforcement agencies. The task force receives CyberTips, or online reports of child pornography, from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Over the last several years, CyberTipline reports have steadily increased; in fact, reports to the ICAC during 2021 increased by 42% over 2020.

In response to increasing reports of online child exploitation, Raoul announced a series of ICAC webinars aimed at giving parents, guardians and educators tools to help children and teens foster healthy online interactions. The free webinars, which take place on the first Thursday of each month, teach parents and guardians about the social media apps children and teens may be using, how to identify signs that a child may have been a victim of online child solicitation, and more. Interested parties can visit www.OnlineSafeOnlineSmart.com or email Karilyn.Orr@ilag.gov to register.

Illinois' ICAC Task Force is one of 61 ICAC Task Forces throughout the country and is comprised of a network of more than 285 local, county, state and federal law enforcement agencies, and the task force covers 101 of Illinois' 102 counties. Since 2019, the Attorney General's ICAC Task Force has received more than 19,500 CyberTips and been involved in more than 203 arrests of sexual predators. Since 2006, the Attorney General's ICAC Task Force has been involved in more than 1,780 arrests of sexual predators. The task force also has provided internet safety training and education to more than 953,500 parents, teachers and students and more than 23,100 law enforcement professionals.

Raoul reminds the public that online child sexual exploitation can be reported at www.cybertipline.com and child abuse can be reported at dcfonlinereporting.dcf.illinois.gov. In addition, local child advocacy centers can be found here: childrensadvocacycentersofillinois.org.