

**May 19, 2022**

**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL ANNOUNCES LAKE COUNTY MAN SENTENCED FOR CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**

**Chicago** — Attorney General Kwame Raoul announced a Lake County man was sentenced to 12 years in prison for possession of child pornography.

Darin Richardson, 52, of Zion, Illinois, was sentenced on Wednesday by Lake County Circuit Court Judge Patricia Fix after Richardson pleaded guilty to five Class 2 felony counts of possession of child pornography.

"Survivors of child exploitation and abuse are re-victimized each and every time an image is downloaded or shared online," Raoul said. "This sentencing highlights the importance of collaborative work between the Attorney General's office, local law enforcement agencies and state's attorneys throughout Illinois to ensure justice for victims of exploitation and sexual assault."

The investigation into Richardson was initiated by the Racine County Sheriff's office in Wisconsin, who notified Illinois authorities after a subpoena response showed the defendant was an Illinois resident. The Lake County Sheriff's office, investigators with the Lake County State's Attorney's office and Homeland Security Investigations all assisted Raoul's office in conducting a search warrant and interview of the defendant. Prosecutors alleged that Richardson possessed child pornography involving a victim under the age of 13.

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 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. To find out how to register for upcoming summer webinars or to view recorded webinars visit [www.OnlineSafeOnlineSmart.com](http://www.OnlineSafeOnlineSmart.com) or email [Karilyn.Orr@ilag.gov](mailto:Karilyn.Orr@ilag.gov) to be added to our contact list.

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](http://www.cybertipline.com) and child abuse can be reported at [dcfonlinereporting.dcsf.illinois.gov](http://dcfonlinereporting.dcsf.illinois.gov). In addition, local child advocacy centers can be found here: [childrensadvocacycentersofillinois.org](http://childrensadvocacycentersofillinois.org).

Assistant Attorney General Shantikumar Kulkarni handled the case for Raoul's High Tech Crimes Bureau.