STATE OF MAINE

Department of Public Safety
MAINE STATE POLICE

45 Commerce Drive - Suite 1
Augusta, Maine 04333

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Michael J. Sauschuck
Commissioner

COL. Bill G. Ross
Chief

LTC. Brian P. Scott
Deputy Chief

Testimony of Lieutenant Jason Richards
Maine State Police

In Support of LD 1944

LD1944 An Act to Protect Children and Adults from Technology-facilitated Summary
Sponsored by Representative Kuhn
Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and other distinguished members of the joint standing committee on Judiciary. My name is Lieutenant Jason Richards. I oversee the Maine State Police Computer Crimes Unit, and I am the commander of the Northern New England Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. I am here representing the Maine State Police and the Department of Public Safety and to testify in support of LD 1944 and the protection it would provide to exploited children and other victims of crime in Maine.

I have been directly involved in investigating physically and sexually abused children and sexually exploited children in Maine for the past 21 years. I have unfortunately seen all the ways in which children can be victimized increase exponentially during that time. The newest threat our communities and our children are faced with is artificially generated or enhanced images and videos used to extort and exploit them in ways never seen before. While Generative AI has many wonderful uses, with technology, comes people who will use the technology to victimize others.

It is important to understand how generative AI works. To steal from the all-knowing Google, Generative AI models use neural networks to learn patterns and structures within existing data, then create new, original content based on those learned patterns. The key phrase here to consider is "within existing data". AI Models can be trained on a variety of data, including text, images, and audio, and can generate new content in those same formats. In other words, many of the websites and platforms used to generate child sexual abuse material, at their basic level, are reliant upon images of known sexually abused children to re-violate them in creating new images and videos from that existing content. I am not allowed to show you this imagery and have to ask you to trust me when I tell you, there is no limit to graphic, obscene, sexual and abusive nature of this content.

I field calls regularly from concerned prosecutors, police officers and parents from around our state posing two scenarios ever present with this material. Either a person has altered an image of their child to create an obscene image or video that is now out in the world to be forever traded and sold or the created image is being used to extort the child in some manner. In either case, I have to tell them there is nothing we can do as these scenarios are not a violation of Maine law.

INTEGRITY   FAIRNESS   COMPASSION   EXCELLENCE

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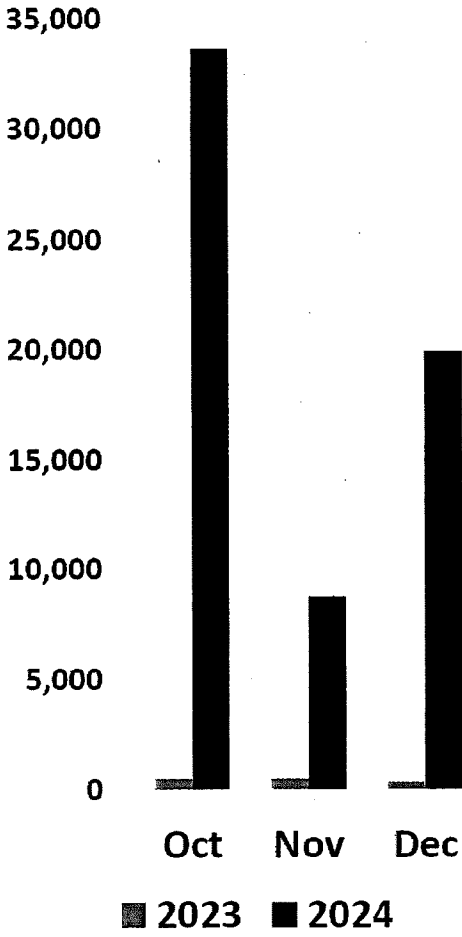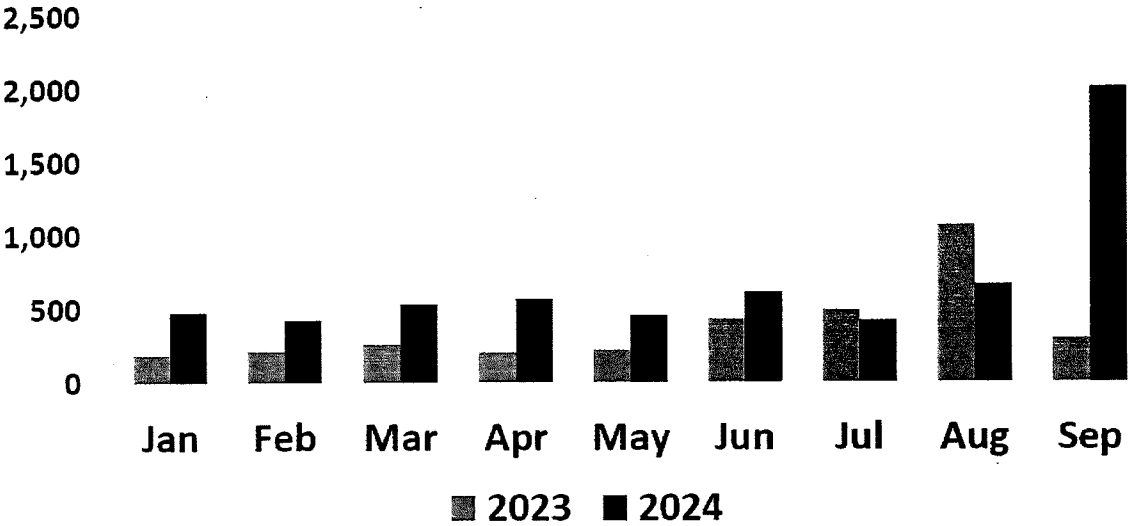Chief

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Imagine someone taking pictures of your thirteen-year-old child at a soccer game or cheerleading event only to have that image changed into a naked and/or sexual depiction or video of them to forever reside on the internet and dark web and trading rooms and peer to peer networks to be used for sexual gratification of bad actors for years to come.

Imagine being one of thousands of children who have been violently sexually assaulted for the sole purpose of selling or trading this imagery and having that base content be part of what is used to generate material sold and traded around the internet to people whose only purpose for creating, possessing and disseminating that is for sexual gratification or to contribute to the sexual gratification of others.

LD1944 provides a manner in which this conduct can be investigated and if appropriate, for people to be held accountable for using this technology to exploit children in new ways.

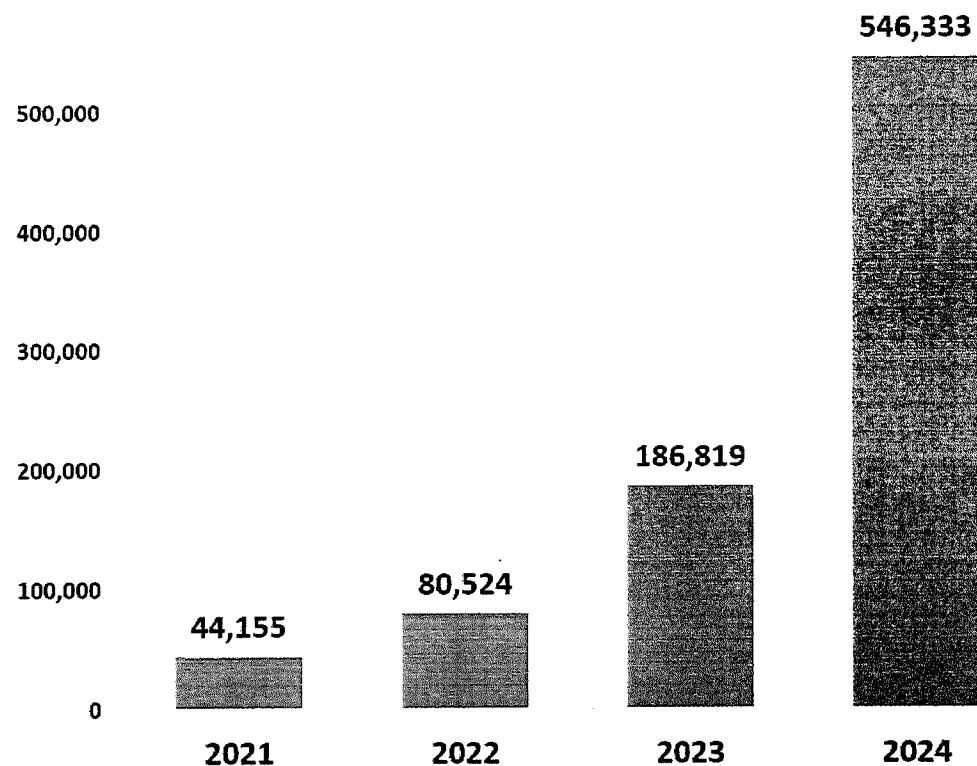It is for these **reasons that we support LD 1944.**

GAI REPORTS

Left chart — monthly values Jan through Sep, 2023 vs 2024:

Month	2023	2024
Jan	~175	~480
Feb	~200	~430
Mar	~260	~540
Apr	~200	~580
May	~230	~470
Jun	~450	~640
Jul	~520	~450
Aug	~1,100	~700
Sep	~320	~2,050

■ 2023 ■ 2024

Right chart — Oct through Dec, 2023 vs 2024:

Month	2023	2024
Oct	~200	~33,500
Nov	~200	~8,800
Dec	~200	~20,000

■ 2023 ■ 2024

*Data from January 2024 through December 2024

ONLINE ENTICEMENT
INCREASED VOLUMES

Chart values by year:
- 2021: 44,155
- 2022: 80,524
- 2023: 186,819
- 2024: 546,333

Y-axis: 0, 100,000, 200,000, 300,000, 400,000, 500,000

REPORT Act
- Child sex trafficking report volumes have increased by 54% in 2024

Technical Roadmap
- Report level tag for industry to annotate:
  - Sextortion
  - CSAM Solicitation
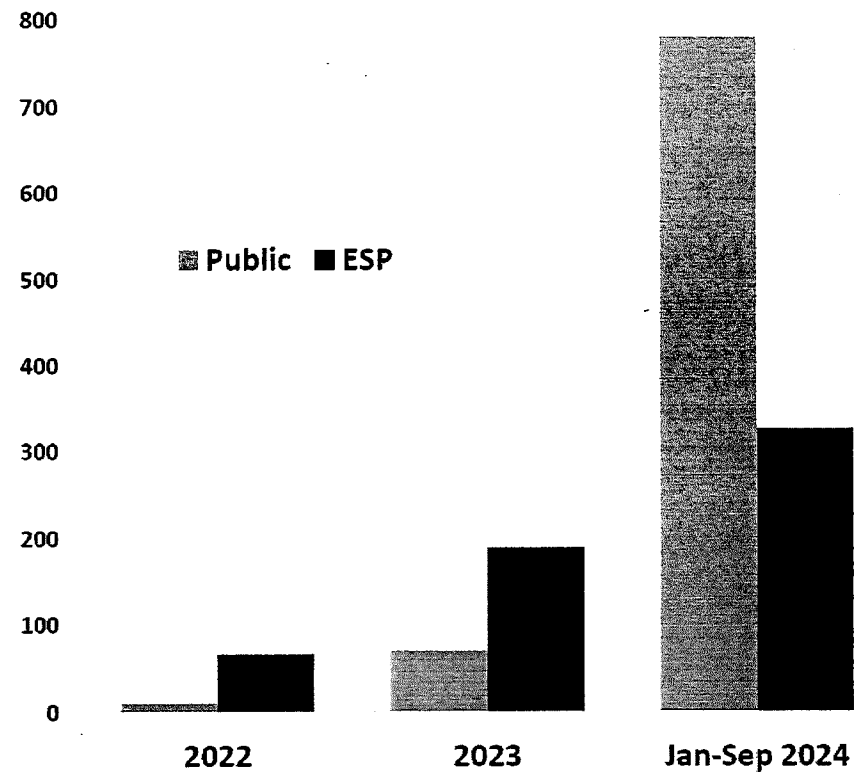 - Spam/Scam
  - Minor to Minor Interactions

*Data from January 2021 through December 2024

VIOLENT ONLINE GROUPS

HIGH HARM SEXTORTION

Abuse seen

- Organized groups with dozens of variations

- High-harm sextortion and enticement

- Coerce children to:

    - Produce sexual imagery

    - Engage in self-harm

    - Abuse animals and siblings

- Most frequently reported by Discord

Legend: ▦ Public ■ ESP

Bar chart with y-axis from 0 to 800 (increments of 100) and x-axis categories: 2022, 2023, Jan-Sep 2024

*Data from January 2022 through September 2024

Categorization of CyberTipline Reports	2021 Reports	2022 Reports	2023 Reports
Child Pornography (possession, manufacture, and distribution)	29,309,106	31,901,234	35,925,098
Misleading Words or Digital Images on the Internet	5,825	7,517	8,446
Online Enticement of Children for Sexual Acts	44,155	80,524	186,819
Child Sex Trafficking	16,032	18,336	17,353
Unsolicited Obscene Material Sent to a Child	5,177	35,624	45,746
Misleading Domain Name	3,304	1,948	6,883
Child Sexual Molestation	12,458	12,906	18,021
Child Sex Tourism	1,624	940	2,002
Total	**29,397,681**	**32,059,029**	**36,210,368**