



Congressman Ted Poe 2nd District of Texas



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 27, 2005

Contact: Heather Ramsey
(202) 225-6565

Ted Poe joins John Walsh and Nancy Grace to announce The Children's Safety Act of 2005

WASHINGTON, D.C. – After 22 years as a felony criminal court judge, U.S. Representative Ted Poe (R-TX) has seen first-hand what tragedy can occur when children are victimized. Today Congressman Poe joined fellow child and crime victim advocates at a rally in support of the *Children's Safety Act of 2005* (inspired by Poe's *Child Predator Act of 2005*--H.R. 1355) to protect children from sex offenders and other criminals.

Congressman Poe was joined by John Walsh from America's Most Wanted, Nancy Grace of Court TV and CNN, Mark Lunsford, father of Jessica Lunsford, and Judiciary Committee Chairman Sensenbrenner (the sponsor of the bill) for the announcement.

“The primary duty of government is to protect its citizens – We as a people are not judged by the way we treat the rich, the famous, influential, powerful, but by the way we treat the weak, the innocent – the children. We must arm our communities against child predators who stalk our neighborhood playgrounds, our Cub Scout dens, our houses of worship; child predators who exploit the internet to target our youngsters or lure our kids from their own bedrooms,” said Representative Poe.

At the press conference, John Walsh of America's Most Wanted said, “There are 550,000 sex offenders in the United States and 150,000 of those are missing and in non compliance – we don't know where they are. This is about protecting our children from ‘domestic terrorists.’”

Nancy Grace of Court TV and CNN added, “This bill is a positive change for good. These are not just statistics, these are real people, real children.”

Drafted in response to the recent kidnappings, rapes, and murders of several children like Jessica Lunsford, Sarah Lunde, and Jetseta Gage, this new legislation includes provisions from Congressman Poe's *Child Predator Act of 2005* (H.R. 1355) that he introduced in mid-March.

Congressman Poe's provisions from the Child Predator Act that were adopted in the new *Children's Safety Act of 2005* include:

- 1) **Defines the term child predator** as a person who has been convicted of a sexual offense against a victim who is a minor – if the offense is sexual in nature and the minor is age 13 years old or younger.
- 2) Requires child predators to **report a change in residence**.
- 3) **Requires community notification** – Child predators would have to notify outlets such as public schools and public housing.
- 4) **Classifies non-compliance as a federal felony** – child predators who fail to register would be charged with a felony.
- 5) **Mandates a national database** available on a free access internet website.

Poe is widely known as a “tough on crime” judge and an expert on criminal and child safety issues. He serves on the boards of the National Children's Alliance in Washington, D.C. and the Children's Assessment Center of Houston. He has been awarded the Court Appointed Special Advocate's (CASA) outstanding advocate award and continues to fight for victims as the founder of the Victims Rights Caucus in the U.S. Congress.

Poe spent 22 years as a criminal court judge in Harris County (Houston), Texas--the third largest county jurisdiction in the country (behind Los Angeles County and Cook County, Illinois). He moved approximately 25,000 cases through the court system. Prior to being a judge, Poe was a chief felony prosecutor for 8 years where he NEVER lost a jury trial.

In addition to CASA Outstanding Advocate, Rep. Poe has been named Outstanding National Victim Advocate, National Victim's Center; Outstanding Judge, Foundation for Improvement of Justice; Outstanding Judge, Kansas Peace Officer's Association; Outstanding Young Lawyer, Houston Bar Association; Outstanding Instructor, Texas District Attorney's Association; Outstanding District Judge, Houston Police Officers Association; and Outstanding District Judge, Harris County Deputy Sheriff's Association (twice).

As a judge, Rep. Poe gained national attention for his creative sentencing of criminals. Called “Poetic Justice” by the media, Poe imposed creative and tough sentences on criminals. Poe ordered thieves to carry signs in front of stores they stole from, required a man who abused his wife to publicly apologize on the steps of Houston City Hall and ordered sex offenders to place warning signs on their home after they served jail time. In some homicide cases, Poe ordered the killer to securely place a photo of the victim on the wall of their prison cell—giving the offender a daily reminder of his crime.

###