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Calling on Congress to Protect Children Online

Last week, I led a coalition of 42 attorneys general in a letter to Congress calling on lawmakers to require a U.S. Surgeon General warning on all algorithm-driven social media platforms. The letter comes amidst growing scrutiny of social media companies for their role in generational harm to young people's mental health.

Social media platforms pose a serious risk to our children and their futures depend on our willingness to protect them in this digital era. States are taking legislative and legal action, and it is past time the federal government stepped up to help parents shield their children from these significant mental and physical harms. I am proud to join my colleagues from across the country to ensure our children receive the protection they desperately need and deserve.

In our letter, we cited growing bodies of research that link young people's use of these platforms to psychological harm, including depression, anxiety, and even suicidal thoughts in kids and teens. We also note how platforms feature irresistible algorithmic recommendations, infinite scrolling, and a constant stream of notifications designed to keep kids relentlessly engaged on the platforms, even at the expense of taking breaks, engaging in other activities, or sleeping.

Read the full letter [here](#).

Expanding One Pill Can Kill Initiative to Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

Last week, I welcomed Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College as the latest partner and first community college to join One Pill Can Kill, my public awareness campaign to educate, support, and empower Mississippians with information on the dangers of fentanyl, how to identify it, and what to do if a student or friend is overdosing.

I am proud to announce that my office is partnering with Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College to educate and protect students from fentanyl. Counterfeit pills are easily available – even to adolescents – through social media and other apps, and they are increasingly common throughout Mississippi, but together we can combat this crisis and defeat this deadly epidemic.

While on campus, my office trained faculty, staff, and students on administering naloxone, commonly known as Narcan, and presented MGCCC

with 500 Fentanyl Harm Prevention Kits—which include two fentanyl test strips, a pair of gloves for safety, a safe drug disposal bag, and a pill identification card that identifies whether a drug is legitimate.

Additionally at the launch event, my office distributed 15 Emergency Overdose Boxes, which can be mounted in public places and include naloxone and other tools needed to prevent a deadly overdose. The boxes were developed in coordination with Harbor Path, a nonprofit dedicated to putting naloxone within arm's reach of anyone who needs it.



Fighting to Keep Predators Out of Our Communities

Yesterday, I announced the recent human trafficking and child exploitation sentencing of Bruce Cherry, Jr. of Taylorsville, Mississippi; James Wilder, of Carthage, Mississippi; and John Dunn, of Biloxi, Mississippi. My office investigated and prosecuted all three cases.

Predators who seek to exploit others in Mississippi will not go unpunished. I commend our talented team of investigators and prosecutors at the Attorney General's Office for their work to keep predators out of our communities. If you suspect someone is being trafficked or exploited, please contact my office. Your tip could be the key to serving justice for victims.

On August 30, Forrest County Circuit Court **Judge Robert Helfrich** sentenced Cherry to 10 years in the custody of the Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC), with three years to serve day for day without the possibility of parole and five years of post-release supervision. This arrest was a result of a May 2021 human trafficking operation in Hattiesburg conducted by my office.

On September 3, Leake County Circuit Court **Judge Caleb May** sentenced Wilder to 10 years in the custody of the MDOC, with three years to serve day for day on one count of Tampering with Physical Evidence. Wilder was also sentenced to a term of 15 years in the custody of the MDOC with seven years to serve day for day on one count of Intimidating a Witness. This case

originated as a report by the Leake County Sheriff's Office and the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services to my office's Human Trafficking Unit.

On August 19, Harrison County Circuit Court **Judge Randi Mueller** sentenced Dunn to 40 years in the custody of MDOC, with six years to serve day for day without the possibility for parole on one count of Child Exploitation. He will also have to register as a Sex Offender. Dunn was arrested as a result of a CyberTip reported to my office.

May God bless you, 

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