



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Information from:

**Massachusetts Children's Alliance, Thomas King, Executive Director
(617) 573-9800 ext. 222**



Massachusetts Children's Alliance responds to arrest of middle school librarian on child pornography offenses

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The recent arrest of a middle-school librarian in Longmeadow on child pornography offenses is troubling and deeply upsetting. When a trusted adult, someone charged with the care of children violates that trust, the impact on the child, family, and community is profound. Even in these difficult moments, there is hope through the support of caring professionals, strong community action, and legislative measures that strengthen protections for children.

One of the most important steps in protecting children is reporting suspected abuse. Many do not realize that in Massachusetts anyone can make a confidential report to the Department of Children and Families by calling the Child-at-Risk Hotline at 1-800-792-5200. For professionals who work with children, such as educators, healthcare providers, and law enforcement reporting is not only a moral obligation but also a legal requirement.

At the Massachusetts Children's Alliance, we are proud of the work of the state's Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) which offer a safe, supportive, and child-centered environment. There, children can share their experiences and receive care from a coordinated team of law enforcement, child protection, medical, mental health, and victim advocacy professionals.

For example, our local CAC serving Longmeadow and the greater Hampden County is the Family Advocacy Center at Baystate Medical, a leader locally and nationally, for their state of the art, trauma informed response. You can learn more at baystatehealth.org/locations/family-advocacy-center.

Parents and caregivers can also reduce risk by building digital-safety habits at home. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) offers an excellent online safety education program for children, NetSmartz through missingkids.org/netsmartz/home. The Children's Advocacy Center of Suffolk County's internet-safety initiative "Stop. Talk. Block." teaches children how to respond if they encounter harmful or uncomfortable online behavior: STOP the communication, BLOCK the person, and TALK to a trusted adult. Workshops and information are available through at suffolkcac.org.

Unfortunately, the challenges to preventing child sexual abuse are mounting exponentially. Online child sexual abuse material (CSAM) is a growing and deeply concerning reality. In 2023, NCMEC's CyberTipline received more than 36.2 million reports of suspected child sexual exploitation, including over 105 million image and video files. Reports of online enticement which includes sextortion exceeded 186,800 that year. In 2024, NCMEC noted a 1,325% increase in reports involving generative AI technology. These staggering numbers represent real children and underscore the urgency for action.

At the Massachusetts Children's Alliance, we are working with legislators to strengthen protections for children. H.1634/S.1163 would make it a crime for adults in positions of authority or trust to engage in sexual activity with minors under 18. H.1593/S.1174 would explicitly prohibit computer-generated child sexual abuse images (AI-created or digitally altered CSAM). You can help us pass these bills and ensure our laws reflect today's realities and hold offenders fully accountable by contacting your legislators.

While we can only mitigate the harm caused by those who abuse their position of trust, we can take decisive action and make a commitment to protect children. By learning the signs, reporting concerns, using available resources, and supporting strong laws, we can build a safer future for every child in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Children's Alliance and our twelve CACs stand ready to be a place of healing, hope and justice. You can learn more at machildrensalliance.org

Sincerely,

Thomas M. King, Executive Director and Longmeadow resident
Massachusetts Children's Alliance
11 Beacon Street, Suite 321
Boston, MA 02108

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ABOUT MASSACHUSETTS CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

The Massachusetts Children's Alliance drives the innovative work to help child abuse victims get the best care possible. We do that by promoting interventions that work, delivering effective educational programming, galvanizing legislative support, and mobilizing communities to have tough, but necessary, conversations about child abuse.

Our mission is to ensure that all children and families affected by sexual and physical violence have access to the high quality, comprehensive, specialized, and culturally sensitive services of one of our member programs. This nationally recognized, empirically supported approach is the best way to put child victims and their families on a path of healing, hope and justice. To learn more visit machildrensalliance.org

MEDIA CONTACT

Thomas King
tking@machildrensalliance.org
617-573-9800 Ext. 222