

CDT Statement on the House Judiciary Subcommittee Hearing on Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking

September 15, 2010

We agree that child sex trafficking is a horrific crime, but the right way to address criminal acts is through aggressive law enforcement, not by making online content platforms liable for the inappropriate or illegal actions of the users of those services.

Leslie Harris - President and CEO, CDT

Washington, DC - Today, the Center for Democracy & Technology released the following statement calling on the Subcommittee not to dismantle longstanding legal protections that shield online intermediaries - including social networking services and other sites that host user-generated content - from liability for that content. The hearing is being held in the wake of charges that Craigslist hosted advertisements for prostitution and child sex trafficking.

The following statement can be attributed to CDT President Leslie Harris:

"We agree that child sex trafficking is a horrific crime, but the right way to address criminal acts is through aggressive law enforcement, not by making online content platforms liable for the inappropriate or illegal actions of the users of those services."

"Congress took strong action to insulate online intermediaries from liability for user-generated content in the Telecommunications Act of 1996. It is precisely these protections---known as Section 230---that led to the dramatic growth of social networking and made the United States the engine of Internet innovation and free expression it is today. We urge this Subcommittee to exercise great caution before it considers any action that would narrow this important legal framework."

CDT submitted written testimony to the Subcommittee that can be found [here](#) [1].

More information on the hearing can be found [here](#) [2].

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[2] http://judiciary.house.gov/hearings/hear_100915.html