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ATTORNEY GENERAL RECOGNIZES NATIONAL TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS & PREVENTION MONTH

Warns Nevada Teens About Sexting Dangers

Las Vegas, NV – Nevada Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto joins Congress in recognizing February as national Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention month to help bring greater awareness to the dangers and consequences of teen dating violence, especially with regard to social and legal dangers of sexting.

“Abuse can go beyond physical, emotion, verbal, stalking, financial or sexual,” said Masto. “The digital revolution has led to digital dating abuse. Parents, teens and families need to understand the dangers of sexting. There are consequences more severe than embarrassment and regret, which may include legal dangers like prison time.”

Teens and adults, including willing participants, involved in sexting can be arrested, prosecuted and charged with crimes such as manufacturing, distributing and possession of child pornography.

According to LovesRespect.org, a project of the [National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline](http://NationalTeenDatingAbuseHelpline.com), [digital dating abuse](http://digitaldatingabuse.com) is defined as the use of technologies such as texting and social networking to bully, harass, stalk or intimidate a partner.

Teens should consider these tips before sending text messages:

- Do not assume anything sent or posted is going to remain private.
- Anything sent or posted in cyberspace will never truly go away.
- Do not give in to the pressure to do something that causes discomfort, even in cyberspace.
- Nothing is truly anonymous.

Tips for parents:

- Monitor your children’s online and cell phone activities.

- Activate parental controls settings on computers and digital devices.
- Communicate with your children about the dangers and consequences of sexting.

These tips for parents and teens are provided by Ryan McDonald, Investigator with the Nevada Attorney General's office.

The National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline can be reached at 866-331-9474.

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