STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

Newsletter From Rep. Diana Gonzales Worthen
District 9

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Internet Safety Month

June is National Internet Safety Month, a reminder that protecting children today means protecting them not only in our communities and schools, but also in the digital spaces they visit every day.

The internet offers incredible opportunities for learning, communication, and creativity. But it also presents real risks. According to the Arkansas State Police Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force, summer months and the beginning of the school year historically see some of the largest increases in online enticement cases involving children.

Recent data from the ICAC Task Force highlights both progress and ongoing challenges. Cases involving online enticement with the intent to travel have decreased significantly, but reports involving child sexual abuse material increased by nearly 30 percent. Investigators also saw an increase in suicide-related threats involving minors online. These trends serve as a reminder that while technology changes rapidly, the need for vigilance remains constant.

The Arkansas General Assembly has taken steps to address online threats facing young people. During the 2025 Regular Session, lawmakers approved legislation aimed at strengthening online protections for minors, including measures addressing privacy settings, addictive social media features, and the role algorithms can play in causing harm to young users. Those laws are currently being challenged in court, and implementation has been paused while the legal process continues.

No law can replace the role of engaged parents, teachers, and community members. The Arkansas State Police encourages families to have regular conversations about internet use, review privacy settings, use strong passwords and multi-factor authentication, and help children understand how artificial intelligence and social media can influence what they see online.

As technology continues to evolve, so must our commitment to protecting the next generation. National Internet Safety Month is a good opportunity for all of us to learn more, stay informed, and take simple steps that can help keep Arkansas children safe online.