

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

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Media Statement

For the sake of the victims in these cases, we are pleased that a settlement has been reached. Our hearts go out to all those who suffer as a result of child abuse. Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide are united in their abhorrence of this sin and crime.—Romans 12:9.

We do not condone or protect child molesters. Our elders expel unrepentant sinners who commit this crime. (1 Corinthians 5:13) In the United States, over 80,000 elders currently serve in over 12,300 congregations. (Acts 20:28) During the last 100 years, only nine elders have been sued for child abuse in eleven lawsuits filed in the United States. In seven of these lawsuits against the elders, accusations against the Watchtower Society itself were dismissed by the courts. Of course, one victim is one victim too many. However, the incidence of this crime among Jehovah's Witnesses is rare.

Congregation elders comply with child abuse reporting laws. (Mark 12:17; Romans 13:1) We do not silence victims. Our members have an absolute right to report this horrible crime to the authorities. The October 2007 issue of our monthly journal *Awake!* features the cover series, "Keep Your Children Safe!" These articles clearly show our concern for protecting children from sexual abuse.

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