

**Remarks of Ranking Member Bobby Scott**  
**Full Committee Hearing: “*Honoring Our Commitment to Recover and Protect Missing and Exploited Children*”**  
**2175 Rayburn House Office Building**  
**Thursday, March 16, 2017 - 10:00 am**

Thank you Chairwoman Foxx for convening today’s hearing, and thank you Mr. Clark for coming to testify before the Committee and provide an update on the activities of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

The terror experienced by parents of a missing child is unfathomable. The child and parents both experience pain, trauma, fear, and uncertainty. That is why affected families need the full support of law enforcement, schools, businesses and other entities who may be able to assist in locating and recovering missing or exploited children.

Since its creation in 1984 through the Missing Children’s Assistance Act, NCMEC, a private, nonprofit organization, has played a central role in reuniting children with their families. NCMEC works to end child sexual exploitation and trafficking through many different efforts,

including working directly with law enforcement, participating in the AMBER Alert program, providing training and technical assistance to law enforcement, offering guidance and information to community partners, and operating a tip line for reporting missing children.

In 2013, Congress reauthorized the Missing Children's Assistance Act and updated the role of NCMEC, including by requiring the organization to coordinate with the Interagency Council on Homelessness in order to address the high number of sex trafficking victims who are homeless youth.

Runaway and homeless youth are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and trafficking. Many of these youth were in the care of social services or foster care when they ran away and may have experienced sexual abuse before they left. These children are at increased risk of being victimized and forced to engage in "survival sex" in exchange for food, shelter, or money.

I look forward to working with Republicans in drafting a bipartisan reauthorization that ensures NCMEC maintains its independent status so it can continue to protect children, especially those in vulnerable situations, like runaway and homeless youth.

Despite the best efforts of NCMEC, more than 10,000 children still go missing each year and scores of children are forced into sexual exploitation and trafficking. I am eager to hear from Mr. Clark about NCMEC's efforts to decrease this number and what federal supports he needs.

I yield back.