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NELSON DESIGNATES PROSECUTOR FOR INTERNET CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN

The rapid advancement of digital technology and artificial intelligence has created an evolving landscape in how sexual offenders exploit children online — one that requires expertise to combat. State Attorney Melissa Nelson is meeting that challenge by dedicating resources and naming Assistant State Attorney Joy Whitmore as the office's first Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Prosecutor.

In this specialized role, Whitmore will take lead on search warrants, arrest warrants, all active cases arising under [Florida Chapter 847](#) ("Computer Pornography and Child Exploitation Act"), and computer related crimes under Chapter 827, for all law enforcement agencies within the Fourth Judicial Circuit. She will also serve as the office's lead representative to the North Florida Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force.

"We live in a time when AI and technology are advancing rapidly and being used at an alarming rate to target our children," said State Attorney Melissa Nelson. "This position will better serve our collective efforts to identify, target, and incapacitate predators."

Whitmore will also serve as the primary liaison for community-based partners, law enforcement outside the jurisdiction, and training organizations, where she will share her enhanced expertise about best practices in digital forensic prosecutions and investigations.

The creation of this dedicated position is a welcome development for local ICAC initiatives and the Inter-Agency Child Exploitation and Persons Trafficking (INTERCEPT) Task Force, said Clay County Det. Ryan Ellis with INTERCEPT.

"Effective collaboration between law enforcement and the State Attorney's Office is essential to building strong, prosecutable cases and ensuring justice is served," said Ellis. "By working together, investigators and prosecutors enhance accountability, protect victims, and increase the likelihood of successful outcomes in court."

Whitmore initially joined the office in 2020 after graduating from the University of Florida Levin College of Law. She later joined the office's Special Victims Unit, focusing on prosecuting sex crimes. After a brief stint in private practice, she returned to the office and Special Victims Unit in 2025.

"As the online world continues to evolve, so do the risks to our most vulnerable. Those who use technology to exploit others must be identified and held accountable. I look forward to working with our law enforcement partners to do just that. Protecting victims has always been at the heart of this work, and I'm grateful to continue that mission," said Whitmore.