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Ed Smart and Ahmad Rivazfar Make Stop in Denver as Part of Cross Country Bike Trip to Advocate for Laws to Protect Children from Predators

DENVER, Colo. – On Monday, September 6, 2010, Ed Smart and Ahmad Rivazfar, both parents of child abduction and abuse victims, will travel to Denver, Colorado by bicycle as part of an awareness and fundraising campaign for the Surviving Parents Coalition (SPC) child advocacy initiatives. While in Denver, Rivazfar and Smart will stop at Columbine Memorial Park at the southeastern edge of Clement Park located at 7306 W. Bowles Avenue (at Pierce St.) in Littleton at 4:30 p.m. The pair will meet guests and share information on how to protect children. From Denver, Smart and Rivazfar will ride to Grand Junction, Colo.

The Surviving Parents Coalition consists of 43 members, and is made up of parents of children who were abducted, sexually assaulted, murdered, recovered or are still missing. Through legislative efforts SPC aims to significantly improve public awareness about prevention as well as legislative progress, facilitate hands-on safety education in schools for children through young adults and promote best practices for law enforcement and communities in responding to predatory crimes.

During the stop in Denver, Rivazfar and Smart will be joined by SPC member, Gay Smither, the mother of Laura Smither who was abducted and murdered in Texas in April 1997. Laura was just twelve years old when she went missing as she was jogging near her home. A massive nation wide community search for her resulted. More than 6,000 volunteers helped the Smither family search for Laura and her remains were tragically recovered after 17 days. No charge has ever been made in her case.

The Laura Recovery Center (LRC) exists to prevent abductions and runaways and to recover missing children by fostering a Triangle of Trust among law enforcement, community and a missing child's family. It has an extensive abduction prevention education program and trains law enforcement in a state certified child abduction first responder course. The LRC organizes community searches and trains local volunteers to continue the search for their missing child. Smither serves as president of the Board of Directors and is one of the speakers for the Foundation. She has been on many searches for missing children, and supports families through this crisis. The LRC is a member of AMECO which is a national association of missing and exploited children's organizations and Smither serves on their board of directors. She continues to seek justice for her daughter Laura, and works in her memory.

Rivazfar and Smart, who began their journey on August 21, in Rochester, N.Y., will end on September 22 in Los Angeles, Calif. Other cyclists are welcome to join in on

the 3,500-mile journey, which travels through 12 states and 26 cities. The awareness campaign, “Ride for Their Lives,” seeks to increase public knowledge and raise \$1,000,000 to help advocate for laws that protect children and fight to eradicate predatory crimes Nation wide.

The purpose of this month-long journey is to focus on four main legislative issues surrounding child abuse and abduction cases:

1. **DNA Collection on Felony Arrest** – to lobby for DNA collection on felony arrest, not just on felony conviction. Currently, 24 states have passed some form of DNA on felony arrest legislation, but there are 26 states that should follow suit. www.dnasaves.org.
2. **Protect our Children Act of 2008** – a law that gives more resources to the investigation and interdiction of child pornography and exploitation cases.
3. **The Adam Walsh Act** – The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act, and the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act set minimum standards for a national sex offender’s registration and notification system.
4. **“Not ONE More Child”** – A Child Safety Education Initiative that educates and empowers children to recognize, avoid, resist, and escape dangerous situations and violence including bullying, assault, abuse and abduction.

In 2009, Colorado enacted a law to require DNA collection upon felony arrest. The legislation was sponsored by Sen. Morse and Rep. Tipton, and was championed by law enforcement throughout the state--but especially by Denver District Attorney Mitch Morrissey. Strengthening the Colorado DNA program will assist law enforcement in quickly and accurately identifying perpetrators of violent crimes. Presently, there are 51,758 known sex offenders in the state of Colorado and 48,674 personal computers that have been identified trading child pornography in a 48 hour period.

Sponsors of “Ride for Their Lives” include Limited Brands, Full Moon Vista Bike & Sport, Beau Productions, Brabon Justice International, LLC and Dixon Schwabl.

For more information about “Ride for Their Lives” and the Surviving Parents Coalition, visit www.RideforTheirLives.com.

The Surviving Parents Coalition is a parent-driven, 501c4 organization committed to saving lives. The coalition’s founding demonstrates the power of survival and how suffering can motivate people to accomplish extraordinary things. SPC lobbies for funding and legislation because they are essential to effective change. Its goal is to ensure young people mature naturally without abuse and emotional turmoil. The SPC is determined to grow and spread out nationally one family at a time.

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