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Media Contact:

Kathy Phelps, Dixon Schwabl

585-899-3238

Kathy_Phelps@dixonschwabl.com

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

SACRAMENTO, CALIF. – On Tuesday, September 14, 2010, Ed Smart and Ahmad Rivazfar, both parents of child abduction and abuse victims, will travel to Sacramento, Calif. by bicycle as part of an awareness and fundraising campaign for the Surviving Parents Coalition (SPC) child advocacy initiatives. While in Sacramento, Rivazfar and Smart will stop at the State Capitol at 4:30 p.m., to meet guests and to share information on how to protect children. From Sacramento, Smart and Rivazfar will ride to San Francisco, Calif.

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 Sacramento, Rivazfar and Smart will be joined by SPC members Cindy and Mark Sconce, parents of Courtney Sconce, who at 12 years old was kidnapped, raped and strangled to death on the banks of the Feather River in Sutter County, Calif. Her killer was being investigated for the sale and trade of child pornography via the Internet at the time. He allegedly commented that if he was going to go to prison anyway then he might as well go for something that was worth going to prison for so he decided to abduct, rape and murder a young girl.

Her killer pled guilty to the charges and was sentenced to life without the possibility of parole (LWOPP) to be served in the California State Prison system. He was 19 years old when he committed this terrible crime and 20 when he was sentenced. He also pled guilty to the internet sale and trade of child pornography and served that ten year sentence in Federal prison, first. He has since been transferred to California's State System prison to start serving his sentence for Courtney's murder.

Cindy and Mark assist California State Senators and Assembly Members in supporting legislative efforts related to child safety, sex offender sentencing and Megan's Law registration issues. They also share their story with members of the California Victim's Witness program at their annual training seminars. Their membership with the Surviving Parents Coalition is due to their belief in the organization's mission and their willingness to assist in any way possible to keep America's children safe.

Rivazfar and Smart, who begin 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 2004, California voters overwhelmingly endorsed Proposition 69, which requires DNA collection upon arrest for all felony crimes. Strengthening the California DNA program will assist law enforcement in quickly and accurately identifying perpetrators of violent crimes. Presently, there are 309,073 known sex offenders in the state of California and 250,410 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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