**Executive Summary**

**The United Coalition for Decency**

*dba* **Citizens for Decency**

Big Idea:  Create a prominent, effective, pro-decency organization to protect innocent persons.

How this Started:

Earlier this year, in January, the mother of one of my former employees came to see me.  She had gone back to school at BYU-Idaho to complete her degree. For a class assignment she wondered if she could research what could be done to stop the tide of pornography which seems to be flooding the earth. She has a unique viewpoint in that her husband and father to their eight children took his own life because he could not shake his personal addiction to pornography.  He had been introduced to it when he was a pre-teen, and though he sought counseling and professional help, he could not rid himself of it.  So instead of harming his family or his wife, he took his own life.  She said there isn’t a family gathering that they don’t feel the tremendous loss.  Most of their children are now grown and out of the house but it still has a lasting, heavy, impact on their family.  As she told me this story, tears formed in her eyes and she said, “I prayed that if it was possible, something good might come from this terrible event”.  She then asked if I would help.

Something stirred deep within me upon hearing this wife and mother’s story. Immediately I got on the phone and called two state legislative representatives and one state senator and invited them to meet with the leader of a pro-decency organization to brainstorm what we can do.  It was suggested that we introduce a resolution regarding the problem posed by pornography to the state of Idaho which would then be forwarded on to the US Congress. We organized a meeting and invited all Idaho legislators: representatives and senators. Through this meeting, we gained bipartisan support; I again travelled to Boise to testify before the state affairs committee.  It was then unanimously supported by the house; it went to the senate and received the same favorable treatment.  Largely, it was an education piece—preparing for things to come.

We then traveled to New York City and met with Glenn Beck and his executive producer. They listened, were visibly touched, and agreed to help by giving us time on their national television and radio programs.

December 11-13, 2008, I attended “The Social Costs of Pornography” symposium on the Princeton University campus, hosted by Princeton professor Robby P. George and the Witherspoon Institute. They agreed to pay my expenses to this invitation-only meeting of forty-five persons, chosen from among the top conservative minds devoted to fighting this plague.

I was recently nominated to serve on a 15-person Federal Committee which will "provide a report to the Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information and NTIA Administrator and to Congress on ways to promote and to preserve a safe environment for children using the Internet." I received formal support for this appointment from our senior United States senator, Mike Crapo (see attached letter), a well-respected state senator & CEO of a local accounting firm, a former VP of private university, and others. Jill Manning, who provided groundbreaking testimony before a senate subcommittee showing that pornography causes national harm, has also been very supportive.

On February 20, 2009 I attended an invitation-only forum in Alexandria, Virginia with other 17 pro-decency and pro-family leaders from across the United States to share successful decency strategies. I have been encouraged to return to their next quarterly meeting.

Why this is urgent:

I believe this is one of the most corrosive and fast growing elements in our society:

-Every second $3,076 is being spent on Internet pornography\*

-Every second 28,258 Internet users are viewing pornography\*

-As of July 2003 there were 260 million pages of pornography online—an increase of 1800% since 1998.\*

-20-33% of people who go online use the Internet for sexual purposes (34-57 million people)\*

-Internet has opened the three A’s: accessibility, affordability, and anonymity\*

-It is estimated the pornography industry generated $97 billion with $13 billion of that made in the U.S.\*

-One of five children in the U.S. in the year 2000 were sexually solicited over the Internet \*\*

-One in four children had unwanted exposure to naked pictures of people\*\*

-One in thirty three received an aggressive sexual solicitation\*\*

-In Idaho alone, in the year 2000, it is estimated about 34,000 children between the ages of 10 and 17 received an aggressive sexual solicitation\*\* The Internet paves the way for this to happen.

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\**What’s the Big Deal about Pornography: A guide for the Internet Generatio*n published by Deseret Book and authored by Jill Manning, Ph.D.

\*\**ProtecTeens* produced by the Idaho Attorney General’s office

If we increase grassroots support to combat this now, we can wield influence in the state and national legislature.  I believe we still have a moral majority.

Local Group:

My wife and I have created a local Rexburg, Idaho group (which is separate from the national group) which has received help from:

-a former vice president of BYU-Idaho & current state legislator

- our state senator and his wife;

- a clergyman over a 1000-person congregation;

-representatives from both the Sherriff’s department and the school district;

-a CEO of a local computer company;

-the leader of the local Republican Women’s organization

-a county commissioner.

-a BYU-Idaho intern who is donating 20 hours per week.

Recently we banded together and facilitated the distribution of 6,500 Internet Safety DVD/CDs (produced by the Idaho Attorney General) that were mailed to every family in Rexburg.  This was made possible since both the Madison school district and the Madison Sherriff’s department donated $1000 each and a donation was made by the attorney general’s office. The labor to stuff DVD/CDs in with the Rexburg City Annual Report these was donated by the Sugar-Salem High School government class, a Madison County deputy sheriff, and a BYU-Idaho student church group which was looking for a service project.  We have set our sights on further local efforts designed to help protect our children and community.

Who am I:

I currently work full time as Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer for a Credit Union with 17,000 members. My credit union board of directors made a formal statement supporting some of my pro-decency activities and has already donated about five “comp days” for this cause.

I sometimes ask myself why I am spearheading this effort. I then ask myself: “If not me, who? If not now, when?” This combines with the conviction that I must walk through each door of opportunity as it is presented. Already providential things have happened in that Glenn Beck has offered his assistance. Together with the right people, aligned with the right cause, I believe we will be supported in surprising ways to accomplish much good to protect many, otherwise defenseless persons. Now we must leverage our collective assets to establish something of depth, strength, and permanence which will assist all decency groups accomplish their most important and pressing objective.

Sincerely,

Craig Cobia, Ph.D.

Father of four and grandfather of two children

Founder and Chairman, United Coalition for Decency dba Citizens for Decency