

United States Senate

September 11, 2020

The Honorable William P. Barr
Attorney General of the United States
Department of Justice
Washington, D.C.

Dear Attorney General Barr:

The video streaming service and content-producer Netflix is currently hosting a film entitled “Cuties” that sexualizes young girls, including through dance scenes that simulate sexual activities and a scene exposing a minor’s bare breast. I urge the Department of Justice to investigate the production and distribution of this film to determine whether Netflix, its executives, or the individuals involved in the filming and production of “Cuties” violated any federal laws against the production and distribution of child pornography.

Two days ago, Netflix released “Cuties” to its subscribers in the United States. The film, directed by a French director, is ostensibly about an 11-year-old girl in Paris who becomes a member of a provocative dance group with other similarly-aged girls. The film routinely fetishizes and sexualizes these pre-adolescent girls as they perform dances simulating sexual conduct in revealing clothing, including at least one scene with partial child nudity. These scenes in and of themselves are harmful. And it is likely that the filming of this movie created even more explicit and abusive scenes, and that pedophiles across the world in the future will manipulate and imitate this film in abusive ways.

As you know, the Department of Justice has a significant role in preventing the sexual abuse of children. The Department enforces federal criminal law making it a serious crime to produce or distribute material involving the sexual exploitation of minors, including the filming of minors engaging in sexually explicit conduct. *See, e.g.*, 18 U.S.C. §§ 2251, 2252. By investigating and prosecuting offenders who possess and distribute images and video sexually depicting minors, the Department both obtains justice for those who have been abused and helps protect children from future sexual abuse and exploitation.

Although the First Amendment provides vigorous protection for artistic expression, it does not allow individuals or for-profit corporations to produce or distribute child pornography. Accordingly, I urge the Department to investigate the production of “Cuties” and Netflix’s distribution of the film in order to determine whether Netflix, any of its executives, or anyone involved with the making of “Cuties” violated any federal laws against the production and distribution of child pornography.

Sincerely,



Senator Ted Cruz

United States Senator