



# SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

## SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR

For Immediate Release:  
CONTACT: James Pollack  
Phone: (330) 604-2739  
[pollack@prosecutor.summitoh.net](mailto:pollack@prosecutor.summitoh.net)  
Twitter: @ProsecutorWalsh  
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### **Akron School Teacher Will Not Face Charges Related to Video**

AKRON, Ohio (Thursday, March 26, 2020) – Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh, along with Stow Police Chief Jeff Film, announced today that no charges will be filed against an Akron School teacher caught on camera interacting with a citizen pretending to be a 15-year-old boy.

In 2012, the Ohio Legislature amended the State’s importuning law. This is the law that on-line predators violate when soliciting children for sex acts. The change in the law permitted law enforcement to pose as children on-line to help catch these predators. But the law does not permit or authorize citizens to do the same thing.

Prosecutor Walsh, along with Chief Film, reviewed reports and YouTube footage of two men in their early twenties who, in December, took it upon themselves to pose as a 15-year-old boy on the internet. They recorded the interaction between an Akron School teacher who was looking to meet what he thought was the 15-year-old boy and posted the video on the internet.

“While the conduct of an adult soliciting a child for sex is very disturbing, according to Ohio law, only a law enforcement officer is permitted to be involved in these types of sting operations. When an adult citizen decides to make their own “To Catch a Predator” TV show and take part in a confrontation, this is not a crime. A citizen cannot pose as a minor child under the law, only a police officer can do that. Let trained law enforcement officers conduct investigations so we can fully prosecute,” said Prosecutor Walsh.

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“My police department and officers are well trained in tracking and investigating these types of crimes. This would have been a much different situation had these people alerted my officers and let law enforcement proceed in setting up a legitimate sting operation. We aggressively go after child predators when we receive tips,” said Stow Police Chief Jeff Film.

Ohio Revised Code section 2907.07 specifically states that only a sworn law enforcement officer is permitted to take part in these types of sting operations.