



For Immediate Release
January 29, 2008

Contact: Mark Glaze
(202) 271-0982

BIPARTISAN PANEL CONDEMNS "DON'T DROP THE SOAP" BOARD GAME

National Prison Rape Elimination Commission Asks Game's Creator to Abandon Plans to Sell Game Making Light of Prison Sexual Assault

Washington, DC – The bipartisan National Prison Rape Elimination Commission (“the Commission”) today released the following statement calling on John Sebelius to abandon his plans to market a prison-themed board game called *Don't Drop the Soap*.

The Commission has been charged by Congress and the President with developing zero-tolerance national standards for the detection, prevention, reduction and punishment of sexual violence behind bars.

“We are dismayed by media reports that John Sebelius plans to market a prison-themed board game he created called *Don't Drop the Soap*. While we have only seen the game as it is pictured on the sales website and described in the numerous news stories of the past two days, the title of the game and its website's reference to “being cornered by the Aryans in the Shower Room” are coarse popular references to rape in prisons, making light of a serious and all-too-pervasive violent sex crime. We urge Mr. Sebelius to abandon his plans for this disappointing enterprise.

We suspect Mr. Sebelius wouldn't be so unfeeling as to create a game about women being raped or the sexual abuse of children. We hope he will recognize that using crass and sophomoric humor to make light of sexual assault behind bars, a similarly violent crime that violates the human rights and dignity of its victims, is equally unacceptable.

A Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) survey released in December 2007 found that 4.5 percent of inmates who participated in the survey reported an incident of sexual victimization, either inmate-on-inmate or staff-on-inmate, in the past 12 months. With a current U.S. prison population of more than 1.5 million, that statistic suggests that more than 70,000 prisoners were victims of sexual violence in one year alone.

Sexual assault behind bars is a problem in correctional facilities throughout the country, including those in Mr. Sebelius' home state of Kansas. The BJS survey

found that a significant number of assaults, both staff-on-inmate and inmate-on-inmate, had occurred in the Hutchinson Correctional Facility.

Every year, 600,000 inmates are released into communities across the nation. Making light of this problem dehumanizes the many thousands of inmates who have suffered sexual assault, and who will deal for the rest of their lives with its physical and psychological repercussions.

Preventing sexual assault behind bars must be a top priority in every detention facility in the United States, and we hope Mr. Sebelius will abandon his plans to market this game.”

The Commissioners are the Honorable Reggie B. Walton, who serves as Chairman, Vice Chairman John A. Kaneb, James Aiken, Jamie Fellner, Pat Nolan, Gus Puryear, Brenda V. Smith, and Cindy Struckman-Johnson. For more information about the Commission and its work, please visit www.nprec.us.

###