

APPENDIX

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

FILED

JAN 30 2024

MOLLY C. DWYER, CLERK
U.S. COURT OF APPEALS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff-Appellee,

v.

LARON DARRELL CARTER, AKA Birdd,
AKA Gardena Pimpin Birdd, AKA Garr
Birdd, AKA Pi Birdd, AKA Pi Pimpin Birdd,

Defendant-Appellant.

No. 21-50234

D.C. No.

2:14-cr-00297-VAP-1

Central District of California,
Los Angeles

ORDER

Before: RAWLINSON, HURWITZ, and OWENS, Circuit Judges.

The panel has voted to deny Appellant's petition for panel rehearing. Judges Rawlinson and Owens voted to deny the petition for rehearing en banc, and Judge Hurwitz so recommends.

The full court has been advised of the suggestion for rehearing en banc, and no judge has requested a vote on whether to rehear the matter en banc. Fed. R. App. P. 35.

The petition for panel rehearing and the petition for rehearing en banc are therefore DENIED.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

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U.S. COURT OF APPEALS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

No. 21-50234

Plaintiff-Appellee,

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v.

LARON DARRELL CARTER, AKA Birdd,
AKA Gardena Pimpin Birdd, AKA Garr
Birdd, AKA Pi Birdd, AKA Pi Pimpin Birdd,

MEMORANDUM*

Defendant-Appellant.

Appeal from the United States District Court
for the Central District of California
Virginia A. Phillips, Chief District Judge, Presiding

Submitted November 16, 2023**
Pasadena, California

Before: RAWLINSON, HURWITZ, and OWENS, Circuit Judges.

Laron Carter, who was convicted of multiple sex-trafficking and transportation of minors offenses, appeals from the district court's judgment following our remand in *United States v. Carter*, 754 F. App'x 534 (9th Cir. 2018).

* This disposition is not appropriate for publication and is not precedent except as provided by Ninth Circuit Rule 36-3.

** The panel unanimously concludes this case is suitable for decision without oral argument. See Fed. R. App. P. 34(a)(2).

He argues that the district court erred in denying his motion to dismiss Counts 1-10 as barred by the statute of limitations. As the parties are familiar with the facts, we do not recount them here. We affirm.

“We review de novo the district court’s compliance with our mandate.” *United States v. Luong*, 627 F.3d 1306, 1309 (9th Cir. 2010). When an appellate court decides a case, “whatever was before [the] court, and disposed of by its decree, is considered as finally settled.” *In re Sanford Fork & Tool Co.*, 160 U.S. 247, 255 (1895). This “rule of mandate” precludes a district court from considering issues the appellate court resolved. *United States v. Thrasher*, 483 F.3d 977, 981 (9th Cir. 2007). This rule is jurisdictional and cannot be waived. *See Luong*, 627 F.3d at 1310. If the district court does not have jurisdiction to rule on an issue, we do not have jurisdiction to review it. *Id.* at 1309.

The district court did not have jurisdiction to consider Carter’s statute of limitations argument because our prior decision resolved that issue. The panel in Carter’s initial appeal explicitly considered his statute of limitations argument, resolved it as waived because Carter did not raise it in the district court, and affirmed the convictions on Counts 1-10. *Carter*, 754 F. App’x at 536. The panel made no indication that the statute of limitations argument was unresolved; the panel did not, for instance, ask the district court to make any additional factual findings related to the statute of limitations argument. *See, e.g., United States v.*

Standard, 207 F.3d 1136, 1143 (9th Cir. 2000) (remanding for resentencing without limitation on the district court's authority to consider additional evidence where the district court had failed to make required factual findings). Thus, Carter's primary contention that the initial panel left unresolved the statute of limitations issue is not supported by the record.

Carter's other arguments are unavailing. Carter contends that the government waived its objection to the district court's jurisdiction by failing to raise it below. However, as noted above, jurisdiction cannot be waived. *See Luong*, 627 F.3d at 1310.

Carter next contends that the district court treated his statute of limitations argument as an ineffective assistance of counsel claim, and thus had jurisdiction. Carter waived this argument by not raising it in his opening brief. *See United States v. King*, 257 F.3d 1013, 1029 n.5 (9th Cir. 2001). In any event, the record does not support Carter's reading of the district court's decision, and our precedents foreclose it. *See United States v. Reyes Platero*, 224 F.3d 1112, 1117 (9th Cir. 2000) ("We therefore reiterate that we will not remand a case from direct appeal for fact-finding related to an ineffective assistance of counsel claim, but allow a defendant to pursue the issue in district court collateral proceedings."), *overruled on other grounds by United States v. Jacobo Castillo*, 496 F.3d 947 (9th Cir. 2007) (en banc). The case Carter relies on, *United States v. Cronin*, 466 U.S.

648, 667 n.42 (1984), does not address a district court’s authority to consider the claim on remand. Carter makes no argument for why we should depart from our general rule and consider an ineffective assistance of counsel claim on direct appeal. *See United States v. Liu*, 731 F.3d 982, 995 (9th Cir. 2013).

Carter finally contends that dismissing his claim only for him to raise it in a 28 U.S.C. § 2255 petition would lead to “inefficiency and absurdity.” Even if efficiency could overcome jurisdiction, this argument is unconvincing. Limiting the issues a district court may consider on remand serves the interests of “consistency, finality and efficiency.” *Thrasher*, 483 F.3d at 982. Carter does not raise any additional argument addressing the clear and contrary authority that § 2255 is the proper path to raise an ineffective assistance of counsel claim. *See Reyes Platero*, 224 F.3d at 1117.

The district court acted outside the scope of the mandate when it considered Carter’s statute of limitations argument. However, the unauthorized deviation did not affect the district court’s resentencing, and it acted within the scope of the mandate when it resentenced Carter. Because Carter does not raise any permitted challenge to the district court’s sentence for Counts 1-12, we affirm.

AFFIRMED.

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UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

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LARON DARRELL CARTER, AKA
Birdd, AKA Gardena Pimpin Birdd, AKA
Garr Birdd, AKA Pi Birdd, AKA Pi
Pimpin Birdd,

Defendant-Appellant.

No. 16-50271

D.C. No.
2:14-cr-00297-VAP-1

MEMORANDUM*

Appeal from the United States District Court
for the Central District of California
Virginia A. Phillips, Chief Judge, Presiding

Argued and Submitted August 27, 2018
Pasadena, California

Before: GOULD and BYBEE, Circuit Judges, and HERNANDEZ,** District
Judge.

Laron Carter was convicted of seven counts of violating 18 U.S.C. § 1591
and seven counts of violating 18 U.S.C. § 2423(a). Carter appeals his convictions

* This disposition is not appropriate for publication and is not precedent
except as provided by Ninth Circuit Rule 36-3.

and sentence. In an opinion concurrently filed with this memorandum disposition, we vacate his convictions on two of the counts (Counts 13 and 14) because they were obtained in violation of Carter’s Sixth Amendment right to confrontation. We also remand to the district court for resentencing. Here, we review Carter’s various challenges to his convictions on the remaining counts (Counts 1–12). We affirm his convictions on these counts.

1. The district court correctly rejected Carter’s argument that Counts 11 and 12 are barred by the Double Jeopardy Clause. Although these counts are based on the same conduct underlying his Nevada state conviction for pandering, the “dual-sovereignty doctrine” provides that the Double Jeopardy Clause does not bar successive state and federal prosecutions “for the same course of conduct.” *Puerto Rico v. Sanchez Valle*, 136 S. Ct. 1863, 1869–71 (2016) (quoting *Heath v. Alabama*, 474 U.S. 82, 88 (1985)). Carter asks us to reject the dual-sovereignty doctrine, but we cannot ignore binding Supreme Court precedent. *See Bosse v. Oklahoma*, 137 S. Ct. 1, 2 (2016) (per curiam).

2. We do not reach the merits of Carter’s argument that the prosecution of Counts 1–10 was barred by the statute of limitations, 18 U.S.C. § 3282(a), because Carter failed to raise the statute of limitations in the district court. He “cannot successfully raise the statute-of-limitations defense . . . for the first time on

appeal.” *Musacchio v. United States*, 136 S. Ct. 709, 718 (2016); *see United States v. Lo*, 231 F.3d 471, 480–81 (9th Cir. 2000). We also decline Carter’s request—made for the first time in his reply brief—that we consider his statute of limitations argument as a claim of ineffective assistance of counsel. “[A]rguments not raised by a party in its opening brief are deemed waived,” *United States v. King*, 257 F.3d 1013, 1029 n.5 (9th Cir. 2001) (citation omitted), and in any event we see no reason to depart from our “general rule” that “we do not review challenges to the effectiveness of defense counsel on direct appeal,” *United States v. Liu*, 731 F.3d 982, 995 (9th Cir. 2013).

3. The district court did not abuse its discretion in denying Carter’s motion to dismiss on grounds of pre-indictment delay.¹ *See United States v. Barken*, 412 F.3d 1131, 1134 (9th Cir. 2005). To obtain relief for pre-indictment delay under either the Fifth Amendment’s Due Process Clause or Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 48(b), the defendant must show “‘actual, non-speculative prejudice from the delay,’ meaning proof that demonstrates exactly how the loss of evidence or witnesses was prejudicial.” *Id.* (citation omitted); *United States v.*

¹ Carter waived his right to object to any post-indictment delay under the Sixth Amendment’s Speedy Trial Clause by specifically disavowing it in the district court, and by stipulating to nearly all of the delay between his indictment and trial. *See Barker v. Wingo*, 407 U.S. 514, 529 (1972).

Jiang, 214 F.3d 1099, 1101 (9th Cir. 2000). Carter has not identified any actual prejudice; his speculative assertion that one witness might have forgotten the precise route he traveled from California to Nevada is insufficient. *See United States v. Corona-Verbera*, 509 F.3d 1105, 1112–13 (9th Cir. 2007). Nor has Carter identified “flagrant prosecutorial misconduct” that would compel the exercise of the district court’s supervisory powers. *United States v. Chapman*, 524 F.3d 1073, 1085 (9th Cir. 2008).

4. We reject Carter’s arguments protesting the joinder of the counts for trial. First, Carter waived his argument regarding severance of the counts under Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 14(a) by failing to renew his severance motion at the close of evidence. *See United States v. Sullivan*, 522 F.3d 967, 981 (9th Cir. 2008).

Second, Carter forfeited his argument regarding misjoinder under Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 8(a) by failing to mention Rule 8(a) in his severance motion. *See United States v. Smith*, 795 F.2d 841, 850 (9th Cir. 1986). We thus review for plain error—i.e., an error that is “clear or obvious, rather than subject to reasonable dispute,” *Puckett v. United States*, 556 U.S. 129, 135 (2009)—and find no such error here. Counts 1–12 may reasonably be seen as being “of the same or similar character,” Fed. R. Crim. P. 8(a), as they allege that Carter committed the

same two statutory offenses against each of the victims, each of the victims was a minor at the time of the offense, and each of the charges arose out of events occurring at least in part in the same two counties in California. *See United States v. Jawara*, 474 F.3d 565, 576–78 (9th Cir. 2007); *United States v. Rousseau*, 257 F.3d 925, 932 (9th Cir. 2001). The similarity of the offenses can be “reasonably inferred” without having to “engage in inferential gymnastics or resort to implausible levels of abstraction.” *Jawara*, 474 F.3d at 578. And even assuming that the counts were improperly joined, Carter has not shown “actual prejudice,” as the district court instructed the jury to treat each count separately, and the evidence for each count was distinct. *See id.* at 579–81.

Finally, Carter’s retroactive misjoinder argument fails for lack of “compelling prejudice.” *United States v. Lazarenko*, 564 F.3d 1026, 1043 (9th Cir. 2009).

* * *

For the foregoing reasons, we affirm Carter’s convictions on Counts 1–12. And for the reasons given in the accompanying opinion, we vacate the convictions on Counts 13 and 14 and remand to the district court for resentencing.

AFFIRMED IN PART, VACATED IN PART, AND REMANDED.

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UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
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v.

LARON DARRELL CARTER,
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Pimpin Birdd, AKA Garr
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Defendant-Appellant.

No. 16-50271

D.C. No.
2:14-cr-00297-VAP-1

OPINION

Appeal from the United States District Court
for the Central District of California
Virginia A. Phillips, Chief Judge, Presiding

Argued and Submitted August 27, 2018
Pasadena, California

Filed November 2, 2018

Before: Ronald M. Gould and Jay S. Bybee, Circuit
Judges, and Marco A. Hernandez,* District Judge.

Opinion by Judge Bybee

* The Honorable Marco A. Hernandez, United States District Judge
for the District of Oregon, sitting by designation.

SUMMARY**

Criminal Law

The panel vacated the defendant's convictions on one count of violating 18 U.S.C. § 1591 (sex trafficking of a minor or by force, fraud, or coercion) and one count of violating 18 U.S.C. § 2423(a) (transportation of a minor in interstate commerce to engage in prostitution), and remanded for resentencing on remaining counts as to which the panel affirmed the defendant's convictions in a concurrently-filed memorandum disposition.

The panel held that a defendant's right to physically confront an adverse witness (whether child or adult) cannot be compromised by permitting the witness to testify by video (whether one-way or two-way) unless use of the remote video procedure is necessary and the reliability of the testimony is otherwise assured. Because alternatives were available for obtaining a victim-witness's testimony that would have preserved the defendant's right to physical confrontation, the use of a remote video was not necessary in this case, and violated the defendant's Sixth Amendment right to confront the witnesses against him.

** This summary constitutes no part of the opinion of the court. It has been prepared by court staff for the convenience of the reader.

UNITED STATES V. CARTER

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COUNSEL

Benjamin L. Coleman (argued), Coleman & Balogh LLP, San Diego, California, for Defendant-Appellant.

Jeffrey Chemerinsky (argued) and Jeff Mitchell (argued), Assistant United States Attorneys, Violent & Organized Crime Section; Lawrence S. Middleton, Chief, Criminal Division; Nicola T. Hanna, United States Attorney; United States Attorney's Office, Los Angeles, California; for Plaintiff-Appellee.

OPINION

BYBEE, Circuit Judge:

Laron Carter was tried and convicted on seven counts of violating 18 U.S.C. § 1591, and seven counts of violating 18 U.S.C. § 2423(a), based on his trafficking and prostitution of seven minor girls. During Carter's trial, one of the victims, J.C., testified against him from Minnesota by two-way video, as she was seven months pregnant and unable to travel. Carter contends that permitting J.C. to testify against him remotely by two-way video, rather than in person, violated his Sixth Amendment right to confront the witnesses against him.

We agree. Criminal defendants have a right to "physical, face-to-face confrontation at trial," and that right cannot be compromised by the use of a remote video procedure unless it is "necessary" to do so and "the reliability of the testimony is otherwise assured." *Maryland v. Craig*, 497 U.S. 836, 850 (1990). Because alternatives were available for obtaining

J.C.’s testimony that would have preserved Carter’s right to physical confrontation, the use of a remote video procedure was not necessary in this case. We therefore vacate Carter’s convictions on the two counts involving J.C. and remand to the district court for resentencing on the remaining counts.¹

I

Carter was convicted of forcing seven minor girls into prostitution and trafficking them across state lines. The crimes took place over a ten-year period from 2003 to 2013. For each of the seven victims, Carter was charged with one count of violating 18 U.S.C. § 1591 (sex trafficking of a minor or by force, fraud, or coercion), and one count of violating 18 U.S.C. § 2423(a) (transportation of a minor in interstate commerce to engage in prostitution), for a total of fourteen counts.

One week before Carter’s April 2016 trial, the government filed an *ex parte* application regarding the anticipated testimony of J.C., the victim for Counts 13 and 14. J.C., who was by then an adult living in Minnesota, was seven months pregnant with a due date in June. The government explained that J.C. had been hospitalized for complications with her pregnancy and that her doctor had instructed her not to travel from Minnesota to California. Accordingly, the government sought either to take J.C.’s deposition in Minnesota pursuant to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 15, or to have her testify during trial from Minnesota via live two-way video conference. With respect to the out-of-court deposition, the government proposed that

¹ In a concurrently-filed memorandum disposition, we affirm Carter’s convictions on the remaining counts.

the parties would fly to Minnesota in the middle of trial and suggested that it would try to secure, but could not guarantee, Carter's physical attendance.

Carter opposed both options on Confrontation Clause grounds. He objected to the deposition because the logistics for securing his attendance at the deposition could not be arranged on such short notice, and because counsel would have to forgo preparation for trial to attend the deposition. He objected to the live two-way video procedure based on his "constitutional rights to personally confront his accuser at trial." He concluded by noting that, if he were forced to select one of the two alternatives, he would choose the two-way video procedure. The district court granted the government's application to use two-way video, and the case proceeded to trial.

On the second day of trial, Carter again objected to the two-way video procedure. He argued that under *Craig*, permitting J.C. to testify by two-way video would violate his right to confrontation unless the court found that J.C.'s absence was "necessary to further an important public policy." The district court overruled Carter's objection. Despite the government's failure to provide any "direct evidence from [J.C.'s] physician," the court concluded that J.C. was "unavailable" because "she had been advised by her doctor not to travel, given the advanced state of her pregnancy." The court also concluded that J.C.'s "testimony [was] necessary" to the government's case, and that the two-way video procedure would "satisfy all the requirements of the Confrontation Clause"—J.C. would testify under oath, she would be subject to cross-examination, and the jury would be able to observe her demeanor.

J.C. testified by two-way video at trial. At the start of her testimony, the court instructed the jurors that, although J.C. was testifying “via live video feed,” they were “to treat the testimony the same as a witness who is physically present in the courtroom.” J.C. was then sworn in by the courtroom deputy and asked to identify Carter while the camera scanned the courtroom. She responded: “Um, is that him right there next to – I can’t really see that well on you guy’s thing, but I believe that’s him next to these two gentlemen right there. I can’t really see that well.” After she described Carter’s clothing, the court “note[d] that the witness has identified the defendant.”

J.C. proceeded to testify about her relationship with Carter. She stated that she met Carter in 2013, when she was 16 years old. She was living in Minnesota at the time, and Carter bought her a bus ticket to Los Angeles under an alias because she was underage. When she arrived in Los Angeles, Carter picked her up and took her to a motel room. There, he photographed her in lingerie and used the photographs in an advertisement on Backpage, a website used to advertise sexual services. She then worked as a prostitute for Carter for approximately two weeks. She testified that Carter kept all of her earnings, dictated how much she should charge and what she should wear, and threatened to beat her if she did not comply.

In addition to J.C.’s testimony, the government introduced as evidence her birth certificate, which confirmed that she was 16 years old when the conduct took place, as well as a record of the bus ticket J.C. used to get to Los Angeles, which confirmed that Carter purchased it. The government also introduced the Backpage advertisement, evidence showing that the credit card used to pay for this advertisement was the

same credit card used to pay for an advertisement of another prostitute who worked for Carter, and evidence showing that the Internet Protocol (“IP”) address used to access Carter’s Facebook account matched the IP address used to create the Backpage advertisement. That IP address was traced to a Travelodge motel, the decor of which matched the background in the Backpage advertisements featuring J.C.

Aside from J.C., five of the other victims testified in person at trial, and one of the victims did not testify at all. Carter was ultimately convicted on all fourteen counts and sentenced to 40 years’ imprisonment. Because the group of counts involving J.C. (Counts 13 and 14) carried the highest offense level under the United States Sentencing Guidelines (“U.S.S.G.”), those counts served as the base for calculating his final sentencing range. *See* U.S.S.G. §§ 3D1.2, 3D1.4.

II

Carter argues that permitting J.C. to testify by two-way video violated his rights under the Sixth Amendment’s Confrontation Clause. “We review claims of a violation of the Confrontation Clause *de novo*.” *United States v. Nguyen*, 565 F.3d 668, 673 (9th Cir. 2009).²

² The government argues that this claim should be reviewed under the plain error standard because Carter did not “request[] either a continuance or severance” of Counts 13 and 14 in the district court. The argument has no merit. Both before and during trial, Carter specifically objected to the use of two-way video testimony on Confrontation Clause grounds. These objections, which brought Carter’s “Confrontation Clause claim to the attention of both the district court and the government,” were sufficient “to avoid the plain error standard” on appeal. *Nguyen*, 565 F.3d at 673 n.2. Carter was not obligated to suggest other strategies for how the government could introduce evidence against him.

A

The Confrontation Clause of the Sixth Amendment guarantees a criminal defendant the right “to be confronted with the witnesses against him.” U.S. Const. amend. VI. “[T]he Confrontation Clause provides two types of protections for a criminal defendant: the right physically to face those who testify against him, and the right to conduct cross-examination.” *Coy v. Iowa*, 487 U.S. 1012, 1017 (1988) (quoting *Pennsylvania v. Ritchie*, 480 U.S. 39, 51 (1987) (plurality opinion)). As the Supreme Court observed in *Coy*, most Confrontation Clause cases concern the second of these protections and its implications for using out-of-court statements by witnesses who do not testify at trial. *Id.* at 1016. That remains true today. *See, e.g., Ohio v. Clark*, 135 S. Ct. 2173 (2015); *Michigan v. Bryant*, 562 U.S. 344 (2011); *Giles v. California*, 554 U.S. 353 (2008); *Crawford v. Washington*, 541 U.S. 36 (2004). But at its core, “the Confrontation Clause guarantees the defendant a face-to-face meeting with witnesses appearing before the trier of fact.” *Coy*, 487 U.S. at 1016; *see California v. Green*, 399 U.S. 149, 157 (1970) (explaining that the “literal right to ‘confront’ the witness at the time of trial . . . forms the core of the values furthered by the Confrontation Clause”).

The Supreme Court has twice addressed the right to face-to-face confrontation. In *Coy*, the Court held that the placement of a screen between the defendant and two child witnesses, which allowed the “witnesses to avoid viewing [the defendant] as they gave their testimony,” constituted an “obvious . . . violation of the defendant’s right to a face-to-face encounter.” 487 U.S. at 1020. In reaching that conclusion, the Court illustrated “the profound effect upon a witness of standing in the presence of the person the witness

accuses,” explaining that a physically-confronted “witness ‘may feel quite differently when he has to repeat his story looking at the man whom he will harm greatly by distorting or mistaking the facts.’” *Id.* at 1019–20 (quoting Zechariah Chafee, *The Blessings of Liberty* 35 (1956)). The “right to face-to-face confrontation” thus serves to “ensure the integrity of the fact-finding process.” *Id.* (citation and internal alteration omitted). Accordingly, the Court held that the Confrontation Clause’s “irreducible literal meaning” guarantees “a right to meet face to face all those who appear and give evidence at trial.” *Id.* at 1021 (emphasis omitted) (quoting *Green*, 399 U.S. at 175 (Harlan, J., concurring)). Nevertheless, the Court acknowledged that “face-to-face presence may, unfortunately, upset the truthful rape victim or abused child; but by the same token it may confound and undo the false accuser, or reveal the child coached by a malevolent adult. It is a truism that constitutional protections have costs.” *Id.* at 1020. The Court “[le]ft for another day” the question whether there were exceptions to the right to face-to-face confrontation, observing that any exception “would surely be allowed only when necessary to further an important public policy.” *Id.* at 1021.

That day came two years later in *Craig*. There, the Court upheld a Maryland statute permitting child victims of abuse to testify from outside the courtroom by one-way closed circuit television. 497 U.S. at 840–41, 860. This procedure could be invoked only if the trial judge found “that testimony by the child victim in the courtroom will result in the child suffering serious emotional distress such that the child cannot reasonably communicate.” *Id.* at 840–41 (citation omitted). The prosecutor and defense counsel could examine and cross-examine the child witness in a separate room. *Id.* at 841. The defendant and jury could see the testifying child witness on

a monitor in the courtroom, but the witness could not see the defendant. *Id.* at 841–42.

The Court declared that, while “the Confrontation Clause reflects a *preference* for face-to-face confrontation,” defendants do not have an “*absolute* right to a face-to-face meeting with witnesses against them at trial.” *Id.* at 844, 849 (quoting *Ohio v. Roberts*, 448 U.S. 56, 63 (1980)). But the Court cautioned that “the face-to-face confrontation requirement” should not “easily be dispensed with.” *Id.* at 850. Thus, the Court held that “a defendant’s right to confront accusatory witnesses may be satisfied absent a physical, face-to-face confrontation at trial only where” (1) the “denial of such confrontation is necessary to further an important public policy,” and (2) “the reliability of the testimony is otherwise assured.” *Id.* at 850.

Armed with this two-part test, the Court turned to Maryland’s video procedure. The Court first concluded that the procedure adequately ensured the “reliability and adversariness” of the testimony, as it “preserve[d] all of the other elements of the confrontation right”—the child witness had to be competent to testify under oath, the defendant could conduct live cross-examination, and everyone in the courtroom could observe the witness’s demeanor. *Id.* at 851. The Court further concluded that “a State’s interest in the physical and psychological well-being of child abuse victims may be sufficiently important to outweigh, at least in some cases, a defendant’s right to face his or her accusers in court.” *Id.* at 853. But such cases would require a “case-specific finding” that the procedure is “necessary to protect a child witness from trauma that would be caused by testifying in the physical presence of the defendant” when “such trauma would impair the child’s ability to communicate.” *Id.* at

857–58. The Court explained that the trial court would need to find that the witness would be traumatized by the defendant’s presence in the courtroom, not from the courtroom generally, and that the trauma would rise to a level that is “more than *de minimis*.” *Id.* at 856.

B

Craig involved one-way video testimony by a child witness, while this case involves two-way video testimony by an adult witness. The Supreme Court has not decided whether *Craig*’s standard applies in these circumstances,³ and until now we have applied *Craig* only in the context of 18 U.S.C. § 3509, a statute enacted in direct response to *Craig* that permits child witnesses to testify by two-way video. *See United States v. Etimani*, 328 F.3d 493, 499 (9th Cir. 2003); *United States v. Quintero*, 21 F.3d 885, 892 (9th Cir. 1994); *United States v. Garcia*, 7 F.3d 885, 888–89 (9th Cir. 1993). We now make clear that a defendant’s right to physically confront an adverse witness (whether child or adult) cannot be compromised by permitting the witness to testify by video (whether one-way or two-way) unless

³ The vitality of *Craig* itself is questionable in light of the Supreme Court’s later decision in *Crawford*, which abrogated *Roberts*, a case relied upon heavily in *Craig* that permitted “open-ended exceptions from the confrontation requirement” based on “judicial determination[s] of reliability.” *Crawford*, 541 U.S. at 54, 62 (abrogating *Roberts*, 448 U.S. 56); *see Craig*, 497 U.S. at 847–52. But while *Craig* and *Crawford* stand in “marked contrast” in several respects, “*Crawford* did not overturn *Craig*.” *United States v. Cox*, 871 F.3d 479, 492–95 (6th Cir. 2017) (Sutton, J., concurring), *cert. denied*, 138 S. Ct. 754 (2018). We thus remain bound by *Craig* until the Supreme Court “see[s] fit to reconsider [it], regardless of whether subsequent cases have raised doubts about [its] continuing vitality.” *Bosse v. Oklahoma*, 137 S. Ct. 1, 2 (2016) (per curiam) (citation omitted).

Craig’s standard is satisfied. And that standard is a stringent one; the use of a remote video procedure must be reserved for rare cases in which it is “necessary.” *Craig*, 497 U.S. at 850.

Our conclusion follows directly from the “core” of the Confrontation Clause guarantee—providing the accused an “opportunity to challenge his accuser in a face-to-face encounter in front of the trier of fact.” *Green*, 399 U.S. at 156–57. Not only does physical confrontation at trial serve as a symbol of fairness, but it also promotes reliability, for “[i]t is always more difficult to tell a lie about a person ‘to his face’ than ‘behind his back.’” *Coy*, 487 U.S. at 1019. Compelling “adverse witnesses at trial to testify in the accused’s presence” thus “enhances the accuracy of factfinding” at trial. *Craig*, 497 U.S. at 846–47. So too does “compelling [witnesses] to stand face to face with the jury” as they tell their side of the story. *Green*, 399 U.S. at 158 (quoting *Mattox v. United States*, 156 U.S. 237, 242 (1895)). These important components of confrontation are lost when the witness is not testifying in court, regardless of the witness’s age or ability to see the defendant on a screen from a distant location. Any procedure that allows an adverse witness to testify remotely necessarily diminishes “the profound [truth-inducing] effect upon a witness of *standing in the presence* of the person the witness accuses.” *Coy*, 487 U.S. at 1020 (emphasis added).

There are also important practical differences between face-to-face confrontation and virtual confrontation. From the remote witness’s point of view, the courtroom will necessarily be defined by the angle and quality of the courtroom camera as well as the size and quality of the screen on which the video is projected. These variables can distort any effort to approximate in-person testimony. The record in

this case bears this out. When asked to identify Carter in the courtroom, J.C. hesitantly did so after testifying that she “c[ould]n’t really see that well.” Moreover, unless the defendant has multiple attorneys, such that one could travel to the witness’s remote location while the other remains in the courtroom, the defendant would be unable to ensure that, for example, “the witness is not being coached or influenced during testimony, and that the witness is not improperly referring to documents.” *United States v. Hamilton*, 107 F.3d 499, 503 (7th Cir. 1997). There is no suggestion of such misconduct in this case; we point this out only to show that physical confrontation serves purposes other than permitting cross-examination and allowing the jury to see the witness’s face.

It also bears noting that no procedural mechanism exists for employing a video procedure in the manner it was employed here. Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 26 requires that, absent certain circumstances, “[i]n every trial the testimony of witnesses must be taken in open court.” The Judicial Conference once suggested a revision to Rule 26 that would have allowed testimony by two-way video in special circumstances, but the Supreme Court declined to transmit the proposed revision to Congress. *Order of the Supreme Court*, 207 F.R.D. 89, 91–92 (2002). Justice Scalia filed a statement explaining that he “share[d] the majority’s view” that the proposal was “of dubious validity under the Confrontation Clause,” as it failed to “limit the use of testimony via video transmission to instances where there has been a ‘case-specific finding’ that it is ‘necessary to further an important public policy.’” *Id.* at 93 (statement of Scalia, J.) (citing *Craig*, 497 U.S. at 850, 857–58). Although Justice Scalia’s statement is not controlling, his reasoning supports our conclusion that *Craig* supplies the governing standard

when the defendant is deprived of “a physical, face-to-face confrontation at trial,” 497 U.S. at 850.

Further support for our view comes from other circuits addressing this issue, which have held that *Craig*’s two-part test applies to the use of two-way video testimony. See *United States v. Yates*, 438 F.3d 1307, 1313–15 (11th Cir. 2006) (en banc); *United States v. Bordeaux*, 400 F.3d 548, 554–55 (8th Cir. 2005); see also *State v. Rogerson*, 855 N.W.2d 495, 502–03 (Iowa 2014) (collecting decisions from several state courts holding that “*Craig* [provides] the standard for assessing the constitutionality of two-way video testimony”).⁴ We now join them and expressly hold that a defendant’s right to “physical, face-to-face confrontation at trial” may be compromised by the use of a remote video procedure only upon a “case-specific finding” that (1) the denial of physical confrontation “is necessary to further an

⁴ The Second Circuit has held that “the *Craig* standard” does not apply to two-way video procedures, reasoning that, unlike the one-way video in *Craig*, two-way video “preserve[s] the face-to-face confrontation” required by the Confrontation Clause. *United States v. Gigante*, 166 F.3d 75, 81 (2d Cir. 1999). Instead of applying *Craig*, the Second Circuit thought the “more profitable comparison” was to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 15, which permits the taking of an out-of-court deposition for use in trial in “exceptional circumstances . . . in the interest of justice.” *Id.* (quoting Fed. R. Crim. P. 15(a)). We agree with the Eighth and Eleventh Circuits that *Gigante* is an outlier and that the proper test is *Craig*. See *Yates*, 438 F.3d at 1313; *Bordeaux*, 400 F.3d at 555. Regardless of whether the video procedure is one-way or two-way, the defendant is being denied “a physical, face-to-face confrontation at trial.” *Craig*, 497 U.S. at 850. And equating a two-way video procedure with face-to-face confrontation necessarily neglects the “intangible elements” of confrontation that, as even the *Gigante* court admits, may be “reduced or even eliminated by remote testimony.” 166 F.3d at 81.

important public policy,” and (2) “the reliability of the testimony is otherwise assured.” *Craig*, 497 U.S. at 850, 857.

C

Craig’s requirement of necessity was not met here. Although the district court concluded that J.C. was “unavailable to travel to be physically present” at trial, all agree that J.C.’s inability to travel was due to her pregnancy—a temporary disability. There were alternatives available to preserve Carter’s right to physical face-to-face confrontation, meaning that denying him that right was not necessary.

The most obvious alternative would have been to continue the trial in anticipation of J.C.’s recovery. *See United States v. Jacobs*, 97 F.3d 275, 281 (8th Cir. 1996); *Peterson v. United States*, 344 F.2d 419, 425 (5th Cir. 1965). As the government acknowledges in its brief, J.C. was unable to travel “for the duration of her pregnancy (which was two months).” Continuances have been granted in similar circumstances. *See, e.g., United States v. Howard*, 218 F.3d 556, 562–63 (6th Cir. 2000) (affirming a four-month “continuance requested by the government on the ground that [a prosecution witness] had been hospitalized after going into premature labor and was therefore unavailable to testify”). Another alternative would have been to sever the two counts involving J.C. while maintaining the scheduled trial date for the remaining counts. *See, e.g., Garris v. United States*, 418 F.2d 467, 468–70 (D.C. Cir. 1969) (affirming severance of counts at the government’s request when “the necessary witnesses” for the various counts “could not be available at the same time”). Although some of the government’s evidence may have overlapped among the counts, the charges

were not inseparable. To the contrary, the jury was specifically instructed that the “verdict on one count should not control [the] verdict on any other count.” Either of these alternatives would have allowed Carter to confront J.C. face-to-face, without screens, cables, and thousands of miles between them.

We are mindful that having to make these adjustments on the eve of trial is not ideal. But a criminal defendant’s constitutional rights cannot be neglected merely to avoid “added expense or inconvenience.” *Green*, 399 U.S. at 189 n.22 (Harlan, J., concurring). We also realize that there may be some cases in which it is truly necessary to forgo physical confrontation at trial due to a witness’s medical condition. *See, e.g., Horn v. Quarterman*, 508 F.3d 306, 310, 320 (5th Cir. 2007) (finding *Craig*’s “necessity-based exception” satisfied on habeas review when the witness was “terminally ill with cancer and being treated in [another state]”). But in this case, the government did not even attempt to continue the trial, sever the counts, or both before resorting to a procedure that prevented Carter from confronting his accuser in person. “The right of confrontation may not be dispensed with so lightly.” *Barber v. Page*, 390 U.S. 719, 725 (1968).

The government did suggest another possible alternative—deposing J.C. in Minnesota.⁵ Although live, in-person testimony would be preferable to out-of-court

⁵ The government proposed taking J.C.’s deposition under Rule 15, and offered two-way video as an alternative. Carter objected to both proposals, expressing doubts that the deposition could be scheduled without interfering with the trial schedule. The district court rejected the proposed deposition without comment and granted the government’s application to proceed by video.

testimony, a deposition would have at least preserved Carter's right to physical confrontation. *See* Fed. R. Crim. P. 15(a), (c)(1). Indeed, *Craig* itself notes that the "denial of face-to-face confrontation would be unnecessary" if the witness could testify elsewhere "with the defendant present." 497 U.S. at 856; *see Yates*, 438 F.3d at 1317 (finding no necessity where the defendants and witnesses could "be placed in the same room for the taking of pre-trial deposition testimony pursuant to Rule 15"). And if logistics prevented the government from securing Carter's physical presence at J.C.'s deposition while also maintaining the trial schedule, the court could have granted a brief continuance to allow the deposition to be completed with Carter present.⁶ Given these various alternatives, forgoing physical confrontation in favor of a two-way video procedure was not "necessary." *Craig*, 497 U.S. at 850.

The government tries to overcome this conclusion by pointing to Federal Rule of Evidence 804, which permits the introduction of certain hearsay statements made prior to trial when the declarant is "unavailable" to testify in court because of "a then-existing infirmity, physical illness, or mental illness." Fed. R. Evid. 804(a)(4), (b). As the government correctly observes, we have held that "risks in late pregnancy, when attested to by a physician, are an 'infirmity' within the

⁶ We express no opinion on whether the government could have satisfied the Confrontation Clause by deposing J.C. without Carter physically present, other than to note that the government is generally required to "secure the defendant's actual, physical presence" at a Rule 15 deposition and that we have excused this requirement only when fulfilling it would be "impossibl[e]." *United States v. Medjuck*, 156 F.3d 916, 920 (9th Cir. 1998) (quoting *Christian v. Rhode*, 41 F.3d 461, 467 n.8 (9th Cir. 1994)); *see* Fed. R. Crim. P. 15(c)(1).

meaning of [Rule 804(a)(4)].” *United States v. McGuire*, 307 F.3d 1192, 1205 (9th Cir. 2002).

This argument suffers from two flaws. First, this case does not involve hearsay statements made prior to trial; J.C. gave live testimony during trial, albeit remotely. As a constitutional matter, the test for admitting out-of-court testimony is “quite separate from” the test adopted in *Craig*, which governs “what *in-court* procedures are constitutionally required to guarantee a defendant’s confrontation right once a witness is testifying.” *White v. Illinois*, 502 U.S. 346, 358 (1992). If anything, our decision in *McGuire* only sharpens the point, as the hearsay testimony introduced in that case was videotaped testimony from the defendant’s first trial. 307 F.3d at 1196; *see* Fed. R. Evid. 804(b)(1). The defendant thus had the opportunity to physically confront the witness at the time the testimony was given. Carter, by contrast, never had that opportunity with respect to J.C.

Second, Rule 804 is a rule of evidence, and the Confrontation Clause’s protections do not turn on “the vagaries of the rules of evidence.” *Crawford*, 541 U.S. at 61; *see Idaho v. Wright*, 497 U.S. 805, 814 (1990) (“[W]e have . . . been careful not to equate the Confrontation Clause’s prohibitions with the general rule prohibiting the admission of hearsay statements.”). Indeed, the right to confrontation is a rule of procedure, not evidence. *See Crawford*, 541 U.S. at 60–61. When testimony is being introduced against a defendant in a criminal case, the Confrontation Clause’s guarantees do not simply “evaporate when [the] testimony happens to fall within some broad, modern hearsay exception, even if that exception might be justifiable in other circumstances.” *Id.* at 56 n.7. We therefore find the government’s reliance on Rule 804 unpersuasive.

The government also points out that the two-way video procedure in this case preserved “all other elements of the confrontation right,” *Craig*, 497 U.S. at 851, as J.C. was required to be competent, to testify under oath, to undergo contemporaneous cross-examination, and to be viewable by the judge, jury, and defendant. But that is not sufficient. Dispensing with physical confrontation must be “necessary.” *Id.* at 850. And a finding that J.C. was temporarily unable to come to court is not the sort of “requisite finding of necessity” that justifies depriving Carter of his constitutional right to physical, face-to-face confrontation. *Id.* at 855.

D

Having found a Confrontation Clause violation, Carter’s convictions on Counts 13 and 14 cannot stand unless “the error was harmless beyond a reasonable doubt.” *United States v. Larson*, 495 F.3d 1094, 1107 (9th Cir. 2007) (en banc). “The government bears the burden of proving that the error was harmless beyond a reasonable doubt, and we assess this issue by considering ‘the importance of the witness’ testimony in the prosecution’s case, whether the testimony was cumulative, and, of course, the overall strength of the prosecution’s case.’” *United States v. Esparza*, 791 F.3d 1067, 1074 (9th Cir. 2015) (internal alteration omitted) (quoting *Delaware v. Van Arsdall*, 475 U.S. 673, 684 (1986)). The “assessment of harmlessness cannot include consideration of whether the witness’ testimony would have been unchanged, or the jury’s assessment unaltered, had there been confrontation”; rather, harmlessness must “be determined on the basis of the remaining evidence.” *Coy*, 487 U.S. at 1021–22; see *Nguyen*, 565 F.3d at 675.

The government has not carried its burden of showing that the Confrontation Clause violation was harmless beyond a reasonable doubt. J.C. was not merely a witness, but the alleged victim of Carter's crimes, and she was the most recent of Carter's alleged victims. Her testimony was clearly critical evidence with respect to Counts 13 and 14. The government acknowledged as much in the district court, arguing that "J.C.'s testimony [was] especially central to the government's case." The remaining evidence for those counts consisted of "documentary evidence" indicating that Carter paid for J.C.'s bus ticket to Los Angeles and for a Backpage ad that included a photograph of J.C. But this evidence does not, standing alone, establish beyond a reasonable doubt that Carter violated 18 U.S.C. §§ 1591 and 2423. The documents do not establish, for example, Carter's "intent that [J.C.] engage in prostitution." 18 U.S.C. § 2423(a). Nor do they establish Carter's knowledge that "force, threats of force, fraud, [or] coercion . . . would be used to cause [J.C.] to engage in a commercial sex act." *Id.* § 1591(a). Only J.C. could fill in those gaps. And she testified that she was 16 when Carter first contacted her, that she told him she was 16, and that he purchased a bus ticket because she was underage and could not get on a plane. J.C. described how Carter put her up in motels, bought her provocative clothes, and forced her onto the streets. She testified that he coerced her into prostitution and maintained control over her by collecting all of her earnings and by threatening and beating her if she failed to follow his "rules." Her testimony was thus central to the government's case on Counts 13 and 14, which "strongly supports a finding that the error was not harmless." *Fowler v. Sacramento Cty. Sheriff's Dep't*, 421 F.3d 1027, 1042 (9th Cir. 2005) (citing *Olden v. Kentucky*, 488 U.S. 227, 232–33 (1988)).

In any event, “[e]ven when the government’s case is ‘strong,’ a Confrontation Clause violation is not harmless where the erroneously admitted evidence could have ‘significantly altered the evidentiary picture.’” *Esparza*, 791 F.3d at 1074 (quoting *United States v. Bustamante*, 687 F.3d 1190, 1195 (9th Cir. 2012)). There is no question that J.C.’s testimony significantly altered the evidentiary picture with respect to Counts 13 and 14. The government’s essential argument at closing—that J.C. “worked for [Carter] out on the track, having sex with adult men in cheap motels, and giving all the money to [Carter]”—hinged entirely on J.C.’s testimony. The government has not met its burden to show harmlessness beyond a reasonable doubt. Counts 13 and 14 must be vacated.

III

Because we vacate Carter’s convictions on Counts 13 and 14, the sentencing package imposed by the district court has become “unbundled.” *United States v. Christensen*, 828 F.3d 763, 821 (9th Cir. 2015) (quoting *United States v. Ruiz-Alvarez*, 211 F.3d 1181, 1184 (9th Cir. 2000)). Indeed, Carter’s sentence was based on Counts 13 and 14, the group of counts with the highest offense level. *See* U.S.S.G. §§ 3D1.2, 3D1.4. We therefore follow “our customary practice” of remanding for the district court “to put together a new package reflecting its considered judgment as to the punishment the defendant deserve[s] for the crimes of which he [i]s still convicted.” *Christensen*, 828 F.3d at 821 (internal alterations omitted) (quoting *Ruiz-Alvarez*, 211 F.3d at 1184). We decline to address Carter’s additional challenges to his sentence, which he may raise to the extent appropriate on remand.

IV

Permitting J.C. to testify against Carter by two-way video violated Carter's Sixth Amendment right to confrontation, and that error was not harmless beyond a reasonable doubt. For these reasons and those given in the accompanying memorandum disposition, we affirm Carter's convictions on Counts 1–12, vacate his convictions on Counts 13 and 14, and remand to the district court for resentencing.

AFFIRMED IN PART, VACATED IN PART, AND REMANDED.

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

United States of America,
Plaintiff,
v.
Laron Darrell Carter,
Defendant.

2:14-cr-00297-VAP

**Order DENYING Defendant's
Motion to Dismiss Counts One
Through Ten of the Second
Superseding Indictment (Dkt. 337).**

Before the Court is Defendant Laron Darrell Carter's Motion to Dismiss Counts One Through Ten of the Second Superseding Indictment ("the Motion"). (Dkt. 337). Defendant filed the Motion on March 9, 2020. The Government filed opposition on March 16, 2020 (the "Opposition," Dkt. 340), and Defendant replied on June 20, 2020 (the "Reply," Dkt. 347). After considering all papers filed in support of, and in opposition to, the Motion, the Court DENIES the Motion.

I. BACKGROUND

On April 18, 2014, the Government filed a Complaint charging Defendant with a single count of violating 18 U.S.C. § 2423(a)¹, transportation of minors with intent to engage in criminal sexual activity, based on conduct that occurred in 2013. (Dkt. 1). The Government filed a first superseding indictment on February 5, 2016, adding seven new counts (Dkt. 125), and the operative second superseding

¹ All section references in this Order are under 18 U.S.C. unless otherwise specified.

1 indictment (“SSI”) on March 30, 2016 (Dkt. 195). The SSI charged Defendant with
 2 14 total counts: seven violations of 18 U.S.C. § 2423(a) and seven violations of 18
 3 U.S.C. § 1591 (sex trafficking of children by force, fraud, or coercion). (Dkt. 195).
 4 Counts One through Ten of the SSI alleged offenses that occurred in 2003 and 2005.
 5 (*Id.*). The Opposition summarizes the facts of these allegations. (Dkt. 340 at 4–7).
 6 Defendant’s trial began on April 19, 2016 (Dkt. 228) and resulted in a verdict of
 7 guilty on all counts. (Dkt. 247). Defendant now seeks to dismiss Counts One
 8 through Ten as barred by the statute of limitations.

10 II. DISCUSSION

11 Unless subject to another provision of law, the statute of limitations for non-
 12 capital offenses is five years. 18 U.S.C. § 3282(a). In early 2006, Congress enacted
 13 a pair of laws that extend the limitations period for certain crimes involving minors.
 14 Section 3283 provides:

15 No statute of limitations that would otherwise preclude prosecu-
 16 tion for an offense involving the sexual or physical abuse, or
 17 kidnaping, of a child under the age of 18 years shall preclude
 18 such prosecution during the life of the child, or for ten years after
 the offense, whichever is longer.

19 18 U.S.C. § 3283. Section 3299 states:

20 Notwithstanding any other law, an indictment may be found or
 21 an information instituted at any time without limitation for any
 22 offense under section 1201 involving a minor victim, and for any
 23 felony under chapter 109A, 110 (except for sections 2257 and
 2257A), or 117, or section 1591.

24 18 U.S.C. § 3299. Defendant contends that the default, five-year statute of
 25 limitations should apply here, because (1) § 3299, which was enacted in 2006, does
 26

1 not extend the limitations period for offenses occurring before its enactment
2 (Motion at 6–9) and (2) § 3283 does not apply to the offenses charged in Counts
3 One through Ten (*id.* at 9–11). The Court addresses each argument in turn.

4
5 **A. 18 U.S.C. § 3299**

6 The parties do not dispute that § 3299 specifically covers violations of §§
7 1591 and 2423(a), the offenses charged in Counts One through Ten. (*Id.* at 6;
8 Opposition. 340 at 8). Their disagreement concerns timing. Counts One through
9 Ten occurred in 2003 and 2005; Congress enacted § 3299 in 2006. Defendant
10 argues that § 3299 “does not apply to offenses . . . committed before its enactment,
11 due to the lack of clear congressional intent. Unless Congress clearly expresses its
12 intent otherwise, the presumption is that the statute of limitations in effect when the
13 offense was alleged to be committed applies. Because Congress did not clearly
14 express an intent for § 3299 to apply to offenses committed before its enactment . . .
15 that extended limitations provision does not apply to Counts One through Ten.”
16 (Motion at 6). Although Defendant’s argument is an accurate, general statement of
17 statutory construction, it fails as applied to § 3299.

18
19 First, the plain language of § 3299 undercuts Defendant’s assertion that
20 Congress did not provide a statement of intent. The statute applies
21 “[n]otwithstanding any other law,” 18 U.S.C. § 3299, indicating an intent to
22 override all other statutes of limitations, including the default five-year period for
23 non-capital crimes, *see Cisneros v. Alpine Ridge Grp.*, 508 U.S. 10, 18 (1993) (“As
24 we have noted previously in construing statutes, the use of such a ‘notwithstanding’
25 clause clearly signals the drafter’s intention that the provisions of the
26 ‘notwithstanding’ section override conflicting provisions of any other section.”

(citations omitted)). Although Congress sometimes includes a separate note to statutes when it intends a new limitations period to apply to pre-enactment offenses, Defendant does not argue Congress does so uniformly. (See Dkt. 337 at 7–8).

Ninth Circuit precedent compels the same conclusion. In *United States v. Leo Sure Chief*, 438 F.3d 920 (9th Cir. 2006), the “Defendant argue[d] that his indictment, which was returned . . . approximately seven years after the alleged sexual abuse[,] was untimely because a five-year statute of limitations applie[d].” *Id.* at 922. At the time of his offense, the applicable statute of limitations allowed prosecution until the victim’s 25th birthday. *Id.* At the time of indictment, Congress had amended the statute to permit prosecution any time during the life of the victim. *Id.* at 922–23. The Ninth Circuit rejected the defendant’s argument, holding that, “[b]ecause Congress evinced a clear intent to extend, rather than shorten, the statute of limitations applicable to sexual abuse crimes, and because there is no *ex post facto* problem here, the prosecution was timely.” *Id.* at 924; see also *id.* at 923 (“By contrast, here, Congress *extended* the limitations period. There was no gap. Defendant’s indictment was timely under the 2003 amendment, allowing prosecution during the life of the child, as well as under the 1994 statute. . . . Defendant’s indictment remained viable at all times . . .” (emphasis in original)). Section 3299 similarly *extended* the applicable statute of limitations—and did so before the limitations period had run under the previous regime, such that Defendant’s indictment on Counts One through Ten was viable at all times.²

² Defendant implicitly acknowledges this is the case by declining to challenge § 3299 as an *ex post facto* application of law. (See Motion at 6–7; *Leo Sure Chief*, 438 F.3d at 924).

1 Defendant contends the question of retroactivity is a difficult one, which the
 2 Court should interpret in favor of repose. (Reply at 2–3). He relies on First and
 3 Second Circuit opinions and underplays the importance of *Leo Sur Chief*. (*Id.*).
 4 Not only are these opinions not binding on the Court—unlike *Leo Sur Chief*—but
 5 they explicitly recognize that Ninth Circuit law holds “that Congress intended that
 6 the amended statute of limitations for crimes of child sexual abuse should be
 7 applied retrospectively.” *United States v. Miller*, 911 F.3d 638, 644 (1st Cir. 2018);
 8 *Weingarten v. United States*, 865 F.3d 48, 58 (2d Cir. 2017).

9
 10 Defendant’s appeal to the Dictionary Act, 1 U.S.C. § 1, is also unavailing.
 11 Although the Dictionary Act is a valuable tool of construction, its guidance applies
 12 only “unless the context indicates otherwise,” 1 U.S.C. § 1, which is not the case
 13 here. Accordingly, the Court finds “the prosecution was timely” under § 3299. *Leo*
 14 *Sure Chief*, 438 F.3d at 924; *see also United States v. Pittman*, 2015 WL 4772731, at
 15 *2–3 (S.D. Cal. Aug. 12, 2015) (subsequent history omitted).

17 **B. 18 U.S.C. § 3283**

18 Even assuming Defendant’s § 3299 argument had merit, Counts One to Ten
 19 were still timely under the limitations regime in effect from 2003 to 2005.

20
 21 Before the enactment of § 3299 in 2006, the statute of limitations for child
 22 sex offenses was set forth in § 3283, which provided:

23 No statute of limitations that would otherwise preclude prosecu-
 24 tion for an offense involving the sexual or physical abuse, or
 25 kidnaping, of a child under the age of 18 years shall preclude
 26 such prosecution during the life of the child.

1 18 U.S.C. § 3283. Defendant maintains that § 3283 applies only to offenses in
 2 which the sexual or physical abuse of a minor is an essential element, and that “the
 3 §§ 1591 and 2423(a) offenses alleged in Counts One through Ten . . . do not
 4 categorically constitute ‘sexual abuse’ of children.” (See Dkt. 337 at 9–10). He
 5 relies on the rule that exemptions to a statute of limitations apply only where the
 6 category of behavior exempted is an “essential element” of the alleged offense.
 7 *Bridges v. United States*, 346 U.S. 209, 220 (1953).

8
 9 A categorical analysis of the violations alleged in Counts One through Ten,
 10 however, indicates they are offenses involving sexual abuse. The Ninth Circuit has
 11 held that the definition of “sexual abuse” provided in § 3509(a) applies to §3283.
 12 See *United States v. Carpenter*, 680 F.3d 1101, 1103 (9th Cir. 2012). In *Carpenter*,
 13 the court held: “Title 18’s only definition of that term is in 18 U.S.C. § 3509(a) and
 14 states: ‘For purposes of this section . . . the term ‘sexual abuse’ includes the
 15 employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of a child to
 16 engage in, or assist another person to engage in, sexually explicit conduct or the
 17 rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual *exploitation* of children, or
 18 incest with children.’ . . . [W]e find the definition the appropriate one to use for
 19 purposes of section 3283’s extended statute of limitations.” *Id.* at 1103 (emphasis
 20 added).³

21
 22 ³ Contrary to the argument raised in the Reply, *Esquivel-Quintana v. Sessions*, 137
 23 S. Ct. 1562 (2017), does not call *Carpenter* into question. That case considered the
 24 definition of “sexual abuse of a minor or ward” for the purpose of determining what
 25 age gap constituted statutory rape, see *id.* at 1570–71; it plainly did not undermine
 26 *Carpenter*’s holding that “sexual abuse” is defined in § 3509(a). Indeed, the Ninth
 Circuit expressly noted that 18 U.S.C. § 2243, the statute discussed in *Esquivel-Quintana*, does not “claim[] to define ‘sexual abuse.’ Title 18’s only definition of that term is in 18 U.S.C. § 3509(a).” *Carpenter*, 680 F.3d at 1103.

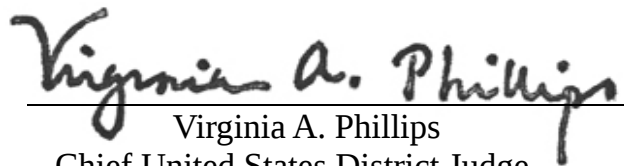
The violations charged in Counts One through Ten fall within this definition of sexual abuse, which defines “exploitation” to include “child prostitution,” 18 U.S.C. § 3509(a)(6). Although the parties disagree as to whether §§ 1591 and 2423(a) are offenses that require a sex act, the statutes undoubtedly criminalize child prostitution. *See* § 1591 (Whoever knowingly . . . recruits, entices, harbors, transports, provides, obtains, advertises, maintains, patronizes, or solicits by any means a person . . . knowing . . . that means of force, threats of force, fraud, coercion . . . will be used to cause the person to engage in a commercial sex act, or that the person has not attained the age of 18 years and will be caused to engage in a commercial sex act, shall be punished . . .); § 2423(a) (“A person who knowingly transports an individual who has not attained the age of 18 years in interstate or foreign commerce, or in any commonwealth, territory or possession of the United States, with intent that the individual engage in prostitution . . .”). Thus, the Court finds that Counts One through Ten were governed by § 3283 prior to the enactment of § 3299 and, even if § 3299 does not have pre-enactment effect, were timely brought under § 3283’s statute of limitations.

III. CONCLUSION

The Court therefore DENIES the Motion.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: 7/10/20


Virginia A. Phillips
Chief United States District Judge