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Good morning. I would like to thank Chairman Jerry Birmelin and the members of the Subcommittee on Crime and Corrections for holding this hearing on House Bills 1717 and 1718. I view these bills as yet another important tool available to our law enforcement community in combating sex offenses, and I welcome the opportunity to speak about the purpose and development of this legislation.

Over the past several months the national media provided extensive coverage of the shocking death of 11-year-old Eddie Werner in New Jersey. As you may recall, Eddie was selling candy and wrapping paper door-to-door for a school fund-raiser when he was abducted, sexually assaulted, and murdered by a 15-year-old boy living in his neighborhood. That 15-year-old boy, Sam Manzie, was also a victim of sexual abuse. Sam had come into contact with a 43-year-old named Stephen Simmons, a convicted pederast, over the Internet which lead to a sexual relationship with a devastating cycle of sexual abuse and violence with tragic consequences.

Just three weeks ago in York County Bobby Joe Hoff, a 21-year-old, was convicted of rape, statutory sexual assault, sexual assault, aggravated indecent assault, indecent assault and corruption of a minor for sexually attacking his ex-girlfriend's 8-year-old son. While out on bail for this assault, Bobby Joe Hoff was charged with sexually molesting another child this past August - this time a young girl left in his care by her mother. Yet another example of an unbroken cycle of sexual abuse which is all too common.

House Bills 1717 and 1718 offer assistance in breaking this cycle by controlling an offenders deviant sexual urges through chemical treatments.

Chemical treatment offers our courts and the Board of Probation and Parole another option to help them effectively deal with this serious problem and deter repeat offenses. These crimes must be stopped, and in some cases sexual offenders need to be chemically castrated to help them stop.

Under House Bills 1717 and 1718 the courts and the Board of Probation and Parole will have the statutory authority to require that sex offenders undergo chemical treatment in conjunction with traditional therapy to reduce their sex drives. Under this legislation chemical treatment may become a condition of their parole and eligible offenders will not be released from prison unless they volunteer for medical help and therapy.

Chemical or pharmacologic treatment of sex offenders provides the help that many of these individuals need, and in many cases, desperately want to control their behavior.

During the development of this legislation, I received a letter from an inmate at Smithfield State Prison who is incarcerated for a sex offense. He wrote, "I hope the bill will be passed, because I feel that we all should have a chance to change, but we must start with ourselves." Many of these criminals want to change, but are unable to control their impulses without medical help.

This legislation was written and re-written over a period of several months. Numerous discussions were held with medical professionals, prosecutors, the Board of Probation and Parole, and the Department of Corrections. It became clear in those discussions that the pharmacological component combined with psychological therapy that the chances of success are much greater.

In my research of this topic I was particularly struck by the words of Dr. Edward Balyk, the research director at the Neuropsychiatric Center in New Jersey who is scheduled to testify before the committee. He said that "if the state of New Jersey had listened to me several years ago, Megan Kanka's name wouldn't be a law, but a delightful, young, playful, preadolescent child with a zest for life and full life ahead of her." We cannot ignore his words. It's time we started listening to the experts who study these criminals and take action to protect our children from preventable crimes.

In figures available from the Pennsylvania State Police Uniform Crime Report in 1996 6,763 sex offenses and 2,856 forcible rapes were committed in this state. Twenty six people are sexually assaulted every day in Pennsylvania. A 1990 study by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency tracked released convicted sex offenders over a period of three years. Of those with previous convictions of forcible rape, 22% were convicted or charged with additional sex

offenses. Of those previously convicted of other sexual offenses, 19% were convicted of additional crimes or faced pending charges – a 1/3 of which were sex crimes.

These figures strongly suggest that we as a society need to take a more proactive role in making sure sex offenders do not repeat their crimes. While I readily concede that chemical treatment may not be an effective method of help for all sex offenders, we must make it available to our criminal justice system as an option to end the destructive behavior of those individuals who are medically determined to be eligible for such treatment.

Pennsylvania cannot afford to ignore such a promising treatment. We must take advantage of this opportunity to protect the citizens of the Commonwealth from sexual predators. I thank you, Chairman Birmelin, and the members of the committee for your time and attention to my comments and your further consideration of this very important legislation.