

Good Day, Ladies and Gentlemen. My name is Angela Bayer. I am a child advocate and preschool teacher. I thank you for giving me a chance to speak before you today. I am speaking today because the abused children do not have the voice to speak up for themselves. I will be their voice today.

Charles Manson.

Jack the Ripper.

Infamous names because of the atrocities of their crimes. We know these men were serial killers. We know they were vicious, depraved and violent criminals. Did you know that they have the same personality's characteristics as a sex offender against children? (According to the Medical Psychiatry 2008 study on pedophiles)

Sex offenders live among us as every day citizens. About 5% of our population molests children. (According to CNN Special transcripts #454 – Thieves of Childhood.) Their behavior is the most repetitive to the point of compulsion, rather than resulting from a lack of judgment. (Dr. Ann Burges, Dr. Nicholas Groth in a study of imprisoned offenders)

Rarely are the offenders of young victim's strangers to them. 90% of child sexual assault cases involved person known to the child such as the parent or family acquaintance. (Diane Russell Survey 1978) 30-40% of victims are abused by a family member. Another 50% are abused by someone outside of the family whom they know and trust. Approximately 40% are abused by older or larger children whom they know. Therefore, only 10% are abused by strangers. This may be why child molestation is one of the most underreported crimes according to the FBI law enforcement Bulletin.

One in 4 girls is sexually abused before the age of 18. Let's put some perspective on this. We hear stats every day. I am a preschool teacher and have four girls under the age of 6 in my class. That statistic means that one of these four precious girls has a high chance of being sexually abused by the time she is an adult. Let us get more personal. Look at your own lives – each of you may know 4 girls under the age of 18 – daughters, nieces, granddaughters, neighbors.... Think about those four girls for a minute. One of those four may be sexually abused by the time she is 18.

I have worked as a preschool teacher for over ten years. I have seen my share of child abuse working with children every day. Children are vulnerable and trusting. Abused children's eyes tell heart wrenching stories

that no child or adult should ever have had to go through. I have seen cigarette marks on children, and malnourished and neglected children. But by far the worse was the time I was caring for a beautiful 3 year old girl named CJ. She was rather tall girl for her age that most would have thought she was 6. She was potty trained, but had started having accidents. One day while I was changing her and cleaning her, she said 'it hurts'. She appeared red and bruised in her genital area. I finished cleaning her and she started crying. I held her and she said 'it hurts. My daddy peed on me.' Those child's words have haunted me since. That is what that child thought and her words were never heard loud enough for anyone to help her. Despite forensic evidence, the child's words were twisted and turned by the defense. This child and her mother came to live with my family while mom got a Protection from Abuse order and dad finally moved out. Eventually he left the country after my husband told him never to show his face around my preschool. But the system failed her. The dad never got any jail time nor was justice done.

This child had nightmares at nap time – screaming and crying. CJ needed to be held and soothed and consoled. She now cowered in corners and did not socialize with other children. Picture a classroom of children playing with legos – building castles and playing and talking and working together. Then picture a child sitting in a corner sucking her finger, head down, hunched over, eyes down. That was her. Gone was the happy child who jumped and danced during music time or listened to stories and played with her classmates. Intensive therapy was required to help her get a semblance of her life back. Her innocence was gone – her childhood was ripped apart. She would never be the same again.

Remember though, molestation does not discriminate genders. 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before the age of 18. Can you think of 6 boys in your life? Do you have sons, grandson's, nephews...? One is six... Do you get the picture of how this statistic hits home?

Child sexual abuse can take place within the family, by a parent, step-parent, sibling or other relative; or outside the home, for example, by a friend, neighbor, child care person, teacher, or stranger. When sexual abuse has occurred, a child can develop a variety of distressing feelings, thoughts and behaviors. No child is psychologically prepared to cope with repeated sexual stimulation.

The child of five or older who knows and cares for the abuser becomes trapped between affection or loyalty for the person, and the sense that the sexual activities are terribly wrong. If the child tries to break away from the sexual relationship, the abuser may threaten the child with violence or loss of love. When sexual abuse occurs within the family, the child may fear the anger, jealousy or shame of other family members, or be afraid the family will break up if the secret is told.

The long-term emotional and psychological damage of sexual abuse can be devastating to the child. A child who is the victim of prolonged sexual abuse usually develops low self-esteem, a feeling of worthlessness and an abnormal or distorted view of sex. The child may become withdrawn and mistrustful of adults, and can become suicidal. Some children who have been sexually abused have difficulty relating to others except on sexual terms. Some sexually abused children become child abusers or prostitutes, or have other serious problems when they reach adulthood.

Often there are no obvious external signs of child sexual abuse. Some signs can only be detected on physical exam by a physician.

Sexually abused children may also develop the following:

- unusual interest in or avoidance of all things of a sexual nature
- sleep problems or nightmares
- depression or withdrawal from friends or family
- seductiveness
- statements that their bodies are dirty or damaged, or fear that there is something wrong with them in the genital area
- refusal to go to school

Let's take a moment to stop and think. Any of those four girls you thought about earlier displaying any of these signs? Are any of the six boys displaying any of these signs? Are you wondering now what if...? Do you want to help these children?

Let's say that you are one of the few people present here today who do not know any 4 girls under 18 or 6 boys under 18, and you are thinking to yourself that these children do not affect your life at all. Maybe the welfare of children is not your priority because there are so many other issues in the State like state road repairs.

Let me assure you though, that child abuse does affect you personally. Maybe the bottom dollar would open up your eyes to the need for reform and proper legislation to be enacted now. Did you know that their abuse impacts society? Consequences of child sexual abuse begin affecting children and families immediately. They also affect society in innumerable and negative ways. These effects can continue throughout the life of the survivor so the impact on society for just one survivor continues over multiple decades. Try to imagine the impact of 39 million survivors.

Health and/or Behavioral Problems:

- Sexually abused children who keep it a secret or who "tell" and are not believed are at greater risk than the general population for psychological, emotional, social, and physical problems often lasting into adulthood.
- Children who have been victims of sexual abuse are more likely to experience physical health problems (e.g., headaches to toilet training regression).
- Victims of child sexual abuse report more symptoms of PTSD, more sadness, and more school problems than non-victims.
- Victims of child sexual abuse are more likely to experience major depressive disorder as adults.
- Young girls who are sexually abused are more likely to develop eating disorders as adolescents.
- Adolescent victims of violent crime have difficulty in the transition to adulthood, are more likely to suffer financial failure and physical injury, and are at risk to fail in other areas due to problem behaviors and outcomes of the victimization.

Drug and/or Alcohol Problems:

- Victims of child sexual abuse report more substance abuse problems. 70-80% of sexual abuse survivors report excessive drug and alcohol use. Their reasons: to dull the pain and help block the feelings that abuse left them with.
- Young girls who are sexually abused are 3 times more likely to develop psychiatric disorders or alcohol and drug abuse in adulthood, than girls who are not sexually abused.
- Among male survivors, more than 70% seek psychological treatment for issues such as substance abuse, suicidal thoughts and attempted

suicide. Males who have been sexually abused are more likely to violently victimize others.

Teenage Pregnancy and Promiscuity:

- Children who have been victims of sexual abuse exhibit long-term and more frequent behavioral problems, particularly inappropriate sexual behaviors.
- Women who report childhood rape are 3 times more likely to become pregnant before age 18.
- An estimated 60% of teen first pregnancies are preceded by experiences of molestation, rape, or attempted rape. The average age of their offenders is 27 years.
- Victims of child sexual abuse are more likely to be sexually promiscuous.
- More than 75% of teenage prostitutes have been sexually abused.

Crime:

- Adolescents who suffer violent victimization are at risk for being victims or perpetrators of felony assault, domestic violence, and property offense as adults.
- Nearly 50% of women in prison state that they were abused as children.
- Over 75% of serial rapists report they were sexually abused as youngsters.

There is an estimated 39 million sexual abuse survivors living in the United States alone. We are not talking worldwide here. 39 million survivors with scars that go deep down inside. (All these statistics have come from the Annual Child Abuse Report for the State 2008)

Most children don't tell even if they have been asked

- Evidence that a child has been sexually abused is not always obvious, and many children do not report that they have been abused.
- Over 30% of victims never disclose the experience to ANYONE.
- Young victims may not recognize their victimization as sexual abuse.
- Almost 80% initially deny abuse or are tentative in disclosing. Of those who do disclose, approximately 75% disclose accidentally.

Additionally, of those who do disclose, more than 20% eventually recant even though the abuse occurred.

Fabricated sexual abuse reports constitute only 1% to 4% of all reported cases. Of these reports, 75% are falsely reported by adults and 25% are reported by children. Children only fabricate 1/2% of the time.

Child sexual abuse has been reported up to 80,000 times a year, but the number of unreported instances is far greater, because the children are afraid to tell anyone what has happened, and the legal procedure for validating an episode is difficult. Let's go back to CJ – remember her – the beautiful 3 year old? She had to be examined and probed by forensic doctors. She had to tell complete strangers what happened. Her mother felt powerless to help her especially when the defense lawyer had already told mom that the father was not going to do any jail time- it would be plea bargained down. How fair is that? Why is that possible to let someone off after they have hurt a child in the most heinous manner? It shouldn't be possible. House Bill 1625 is a big step in the right direction of getting justice for abused children.

Show real life pictures of person after showing cute picture of children.
Show realistic outcomes.

Most perpetrators don't molest only one child if they are not reported and stopped.

- Nearly 70% of child sex offenders have between 1 and 9 victims; at least 20% have 10 to 40 victims. (23)
- An average serial child molester may have as many as 400 victims in his lifetime.

The pedophiles need to know that PA is a State where child molestation is not accepted and penalties are stiff. I stand before you today as a mother, teacher, and advocate to ask you this question: Does our future society mean something to you? If so, please consider voting in favor of House Bill 1625 to make a difference for abused children. Thank you for your time.