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Good morning. My name is Sarah Beeghley and I am a 10<sup>th</sup> grade student here at Bishop McDevitt High School. Since I was 11 years old, I have presented at local, state, national and international educational technology conferences both virtually and in person. I have won many awards such as first place at the Pennsylvania State Middle School Computer Fair in the Web Page Design Category in 2009, second place in the Multimedia Category the following year. In 2009 I won an international award when the EduBlog Awards named me as Best Student Blogger. Due to my passion for history and the American Civil War, I was named the 2012 Future Leader Award Winner for the Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies. I have been interviewed for newspapers and magazines and have been published in three educational technology publications.

All of this recognition came about because of a project I created in 2009 for the PA Middle School Computer Fair called Civil War Sallie. Civil War Sallie is a donated Boyd's Bear from Gettysburg who travels around looking Civil War Battlefields, museums, and schools learning about the Civil War. Sallie reports back to home by writing blog posts daily and posting pictures to Flickr. I became known as "Civil War Sallie" because she took off from the first day she went live at the Pennsylvania Educational Technology Expo and Conference in 2009. From there I began presenting on my Civil War Sallie Project and Creating Global Projects, first with my teacher friend Mr. Brandon Lutz who is a teacher in Philadelphia area and then on my own.

I became very “famous” in the educational and teacher world and I was presenting and speaking to educators about Civil War Sallie and How to Create A Global Project. Because of this project I have met people from around the world and I have gotten to see places that people would normally not be able to see including being given a private tour of Ford’s Theatre and Clara Barton’s home. It was because I was presenting and winning awards that one of my friends got jealous and cyberbullied me.

As you know, Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Cyberbullying has taken what used to happen on the playground to the Internet. The playground bully is now the cyberbully. While kids who are being cyberbullied are often bullied in person they have a much harder time getting away from their bully. Cyberbullying can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Cyberbullying messages and images can be posted anonymously and then quickly sent to others. It can be difficult and sometimes impossible to trace the source.

In the research report *Feeling Safe*, the Girl Scouts Research Institute found that 46% defined safety as not having their feelings hurt; girls who face cyberbullying or the threat of cyberbullying do not feel safe. Also, 32% of girls said their number one concern was a fear of being teased or made fun of, and 38% of girls surveyed worry about their emotional safety when spending time with their peers. Also more girls than boys get cyberbullied and girls my age are the most likely to cyberbully.

Today's teen lives in a world filled with technology and social media; everything from Facebook and Twitter to Instagram and Tumblr. In addition to connecting with friends and families, teens can follow their favorite celebrities and artists. Teens can also join online groups centered on their favorite musical group and discuss the band's latest songs with others from around the globe. However, the Internet can also have a dark side. Cyberspace poses a number of other threats to young girls, such as online sexual predators, inappropriate sharing of information, and the disturbing new trend of "sexting". There are many heartbreaking cases, where we hear stories about girls like Megan Meier, Phoebe Prince, and Alexis Pilkington, each of whom ended her life after unrelenting bullying, including cyberbullying. Fortunately, my story is not that bad.

I am here today because I was the victim of cyberbullying. In class, a girl who I thought was my friend would say mean things to me or about me behind my back when I talked about presenting or the things I was doing. From this traditional bullying, the girl took it online. At first, she made an online quiz and sent it to most of my classmates and friends. The quiz questions were who is the weirdest? Who is the teacher's pet? Who does that stupid thing with the bear? The correct answer to all the questions was my name. Many of my friends took the quiz and when I learned about it, I spent the next few days crying and wondering why would she do this? This girl was supposed to be my best friend. I learned that I couldn't trust anybody. My parents talked to the girl's parents and they promised it would end and never happen again. That lasted only a few months until the girl again sent messages to me online and started talking about me in school.

This time, my parents told the school and the girl only got three days of In-School Suspension and her parents said she was grounded. She was only upset that she missed the basketball playoffs. Her parents even got mad at my parents for involving the school. Because the school did nothing, I was forced to switch schools. During my 8<sup>th</sup> grade year, I was cyberbullied again but this time my parents stopped it right away. The girl and I were in a group for a science project. The project required for us to build a mudslide and I had asked my Discovery Channel Education friends what we would need to get a good grade. She said something on Group Messaging on Facebook and finished it off with "in your face." My mom saw it and stepped in and I told the teacher after the project and she never put us in a group again. This girl continued to post inappropriate remarks about me on my Facebook page and say things about me to her friends online. The school said, it was "girls being girls" and did nothing. This online and in school harassment continued for months until the end of the year when we graduated to different high schools.

While only a minor incident there was one more that took place this past summer. A neighbor friend and I were planning a sleepover; however I left the house without telling my parents. Because of this, I was not allowed to sleepover and she didn't like that and sent out a tweet to hundreds of her followers that contained inappropriate remarks about my parents. I showed it to my parents and my mom went over to the girl's house and told her mom. The girl blocks me on all social media because now her mom knows what she does.

After all of these negative experiences, I took the advice one of my teacher friends told me to turn my story around and become an advocate. So now I am

working with a company from England called the Cybersmile Foundation which is making teenagers everywhere aware of cyberbullying. Today, I am known online as “The Geeky Girl” and I’m an advocate against cyberbullying. Teachers are now asking me for my opinions on talking to students and asking me if they can share my story. I am also happy to say that I am once again presenting to teachers and parents about how to be aware of cyberbullying.

I support House Bill 1163 because it will make cyberbullying a punishable offense. But I think that we should make it mandatory for all teachers to attend cyberbullying training. While the PA School Code has information on bullying the schools are left to create different policies that vary in both the way they are written and implemented. Finally, we need to do more to educate parents, teachers, administrators, students, and other school personnel in recognizing, preventing, and mitigating the effects of cyberbullying.

On behalf of my classmates here at Bishop McDevitt High School and myself I want to say thank you for your time and for your support of this important topic.