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Testimony before the House Judiciary Committee Public Hearing on H.B. 1163

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Bishop McDevitt High School

Harrisburg, PA

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On behalf of the 50 rape crisis programs throughout the Commonwealth, I would like to thank Chairman Marsico and Chairman Caltagirone for inviting me to speak today on the topic of proposed legislation H.B. 1163.

This legislation would serve a multitude of purposes, not the least of which is protecting innocent children from being maligned on Facebook, twitter and other online public domain spaces, resulting in depression, isolation and sometimes death.

Cyber harassment also serves to taint the jury pools, many of which are already disposed to believe myths and stereotypes about victim behavior.

Finally, in the absence of this legislation, perpetrators and their associates can not only impact a victim in the case at hand, but further discourage already low reporting rates for sexual assault.

I would like to applaud the Chairman for sponsoring this critical legislation as we desperately need to advocate for the rights and needs of victims concomitantly with advancements in technology.