



URGENT MEDIA ADVISORY

May 9, 2012

Sandusky lawyer continues to criminalize victims

Background: Jerry Sandusky's attorney, Joe Amendola, continues to hunt information about victims' backgrounds, such as educational history, criminal history and lifestyle choices.

Amendola is attempting to discredit victims by questioning their credibility with victim-blaming tactics. By judging and labeling victims as troubled, unreliable or risky, society shifts the focus from the offender's behavior to the victim's. Many offenders rely on the public to focus on victim behaviors instead of their own. Offenders may purposefully select victims with characteristics the public may be willing to judge harshly. All of these tactics are clearly meant to intimidate victims from coming forward.

In fact, The Second Mile is a program for youth already determined to be "at risk." The Second Mile programs are intended to decrease risks of future behavioral problems and victimization. Many sex offenders intentionally seek potential victims with these characteristics in order to exploit their vulnerabilities and gain trust. This is where society has an obligation to protect children and an opportunity to learn about preventing sexual violence.

The majority of sexual assaults, an estimated 63 percent, are never reported to the police (Rennison, 2002). The reality is one in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18 years old (Finkelhor, 1990), and up to 93 percent of the time the perpetrator is known to the victim (Snyder, 2000). Most times, the perpetrator is known and trusted by the victim's family and community.

Press opportunity: Following today's hearing, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR), the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) and AEquitas are available to provide information and context. All three organizations have been working to educate the public on sexual violence including child sexual abuse, warning signs, and what to do if child sexual abuse is suspected. In addition, Penn State University has pledged a \$1.5 million grant to partner with PCAR and the NSVRC in developing policies and procedures to prevent sexual violence.

Immediate Contact Information:

PCAR: Delilah Rumburg, CEO, (717) 495-9554 or (717) 728-9740, Ext. 119

NSVRC: Tracy Cox, Communications Director, (877) 739-3895, Ext. 116

AEquitas: Chris Mallios, Attorney Advisor, (202) 596-4230

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Rennison, C. A. (2002). *Rape and sexual assault: Reporting to police and medical attention, 1992-2000* [NCJ 194530]. Retrieved from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics: <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/rsarp00.pdf>

Finkelhor, D., Hotaling, G., Lewis, I. A., & Smith, C. (1990). Sexual abuse in a national survey of adult men and women: Prevalence, characteristics and risk factors. *Child Abuse & Neglect* 14, 19-28. doi:10.1016/0145-2134(90)90077-7

Snyder, H. (2000). *A Statistical Report using data from the National Incident-Based Reporting System*. Retrieved from the U.S. Department of Justice, National Center for Juvenile Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics: <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/saycrle.pdf>