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The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Clippinger:

I write in support of HB0164, Sexual Offenses and Lifetime Supervision. I am a Deputy State's Attorney for Queen Anne's County and a leadership member of the Queen Anne's County CARE (Child Abuse Recognition and Evaluation) Team, a multidisciplinary group that reviews cases and sets policies and procedures according to State and National Standards for the Queen Anne's County Child Advocacy Center. In this role, I assist in the supervision and prosecution of sexual crimes against children. Additionally, I participate on the Special Victims Subcommittee for the Maryland State's Attorney's Association.

Two fairly recent case examples from Queen Anne's County come to mind as I write to you in support of this bill. Both cases involved teenage females who had been molested repeatedly at their respective homes. Both young women were in high school. Both were vaginally and orally penetrated repeatedly over a period of years. The offender in one matter was the victim's parent's long-term partner, a de facto step-parent. The other offender was the victim's biological father. Both offenders entered pleas of guilty to Sexual Abuse of a Minor. Both of those individuals were sentenced to prison. And both will be eligible for parole after only serving 25% of their active sentence instead of 50%. And, while both are on the Sex Offender Registry for a lifetime term, neither is subject to lifetime supervision. Why? Simply put, the child victims were too old.

Under the current law, Sexual Abuse of a Minor is neither considered a violent offense nor subject to lifetime sexual offender supervision upon conviction unless the victim of the crime is under the age of 13 years old. This is nonsensical. The sexual abuse of a minor inherently is a violent crime, regardless of victim's age, simply because of the nature of the sexual act combined with the relationship between the offender and victim. The criminal violation requires a "special" relationship (parent/ person with care, custody, and responsibility or family member or a household member). Children require protection, especially in their homes, by the people responsible for their care. A sexual act committed by the people with this responsibility not only expose children unnecessarily to sex, often in horrific ways, most often irreversibly affecting these children for life. The physical imprints of these crimes fade and disappear. The mental and emotional scars of these crimes mark a child's soul for life. Because of this, I strongly urge the passage of HB0164.

Very truly yours,

Christine Dulla Rickard

Christine Dulla Rickard
Deputy State's Attorney