

Text of speech written and delivered by Pennsylvania 6th grader Madison during news conference in Harrisburg, PA on Jan. 26, 2017, with Auditor General Eugene DePasquale

Madison's Speech

I want to start this by just saying "Thank you". Thank you to each and every person who signed our petitions, thank you to every organization willing to get involved and believing in the cause, and most of all thank you to my dad. If it wasn't for his support and guidance my desire to help would have never had direction.

This all started 10 months ago when watching a TV show on YouTube called Cold Justice Sex Crimes Justice for Flint. Just google it and you will find it. The case was about 2 violent sexual assaults that occurred in Flint, Michigan that were able to identify the assailant through DNA testing of the rape kits. Although these two survivors were able to find justice, the show went on to discuss the 100's of rape kits in the Flint County Police Department that were untested and the 100s of thousands across the country. I asked my dad if those other rape kits would ever get tested. He looked at me and looked sad and said "It would take years and they may never test them all." So I asked him what we could do about it and that question is what lead us here.

My dad told us to make a change we needed the support of the community to get people to listen. So I spent every day after school and the entire summer trying to bring awareness and support to the topic. We received 500 signatures by sitting outside near the bike path and stopping everyone as they came by, but I knew it still wasn't enough. So we started asking for help from local businesses and churches. The Trinity Episcopal Church was so gracious to instantly want to help and provide support. They invited us to mass and many signed it during mass, and EVERY single person leaving that church stopped, and listened to our story, and signed the petition. It was the day I realized this could be something and we could really make a difference!

I ask myself everyday what kind of a world I want to live in and now I ask you. Do you want to live in a world that doesn't take rape and sexual assault seriously? Do you want to live in a world where victims of sexual crimes find justice in less than 10% of cases? This is the world we live in and I think it has to change. Now because of all the people who signed the petition, the real heroes of this story!!! We can make a difference and change a small, but vital piece of the world we live in.

I just want to end by thanking some good people that have been a part of this journey and continue to support the cause. So thank you to my father, Michael, my sis Autumn and bro Chad, Stepmom, Susan, pappy Lenny, the Williamsport YWCA, Father Izza and

thank you to Linda from the Trinity Episcopal Church, Williamsport Sun-Gazette Cara you rock, State Representative Garth Everett, and state Auditor General. And to the people that want to remain unknown. With the continued support of all of you and the community we can help bring justice to the people who need it most.