

If you or someone you know has been the victim of child sexual abuse, please contact your local rape crisis center for free and confidential support.

**The Center For Victims of
Violence and Crime
Hotline: 1-866-363-7273**

or contact the Pennsylvania Coalition
Against Rape at
1-888-772-PCAR
or
www.pcar.org



**Mark M. Gillen
State Representative
128th Legislative District**

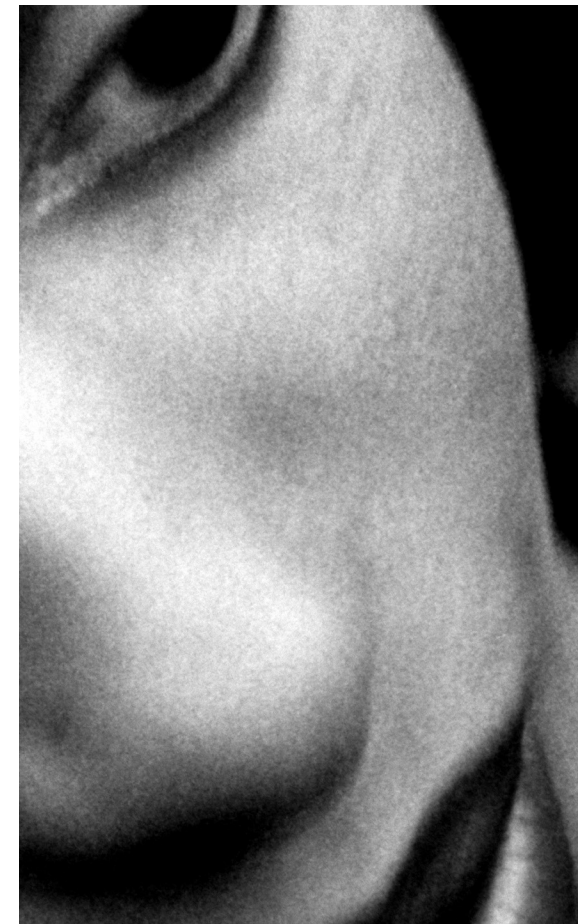
DISTRICT OFFICE:

**29 Village Center Drive, Suite A7
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Fax: (610) 775-3736**

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RepGillen.com



**Protect Yourself
From Sexual Violence**

Tips from the
Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape

Rep. Mark M. Gillen

HOW TO REDUCE YOUR RISK

Although sexual violence can never be prevented, here are some suggestions to help you reduce your risk of being assaulted.

- ✓ *Trust your gut.* If you don't feel comfortable in a situation, leave.
- ✓ *Be in charge of your own life.* Don't put yourself in a situation where you have to rely on other people to take care of you. Also, when on a date, don't feel you "owe" that person anything.
- ✓ *Be cautious inviting someone else into your home or going to someone else's home.* Three out of five sexual assaults occur in the victim's home or the home of an acquaintance.
- ✓ *Do not mix sexual decisions with drugs and alcohol.* Your ability to make smart decisions is hampered when you are high or drunk.
- ✓ *When going out with someone new, don't feel you have to go alone.* Go on a group date or meet in a public place.
- ✓ *Be aware of date rape drugs.* Don't accept beverages from open containers and don't leave your drink unattended.
- ✓ *Walk near the curb.* Avoid passing close to shrubbery, dark doorways, or other places of concealment.
- ✓ *Avoid falling for lines such as "If you loved me..."* If your partner loved you, he/she would respect your feelings and wait until you are ready.
- ✓ *Use only well-lit entrances.* If you notice an entrance without appropriate lighting, notify your landlord or a maintenance person.
- ✓ *Avoid individuals who:*
 - don't listen to you
 - ignore personal space boundaries
 - make you feel guilty or accuse you of being "uptight" for resisting sexual advances
 - express sexist attitudes and jokes
 - act jealous or possessive

✓ *Communicate.* Think about what you really want before you get into a sexual situation, and communicate clearly with your partner. If you think you are getting mixed messages, ask your date what he/she wants.

✓ *Be assertive.* Respect yourself enough not to do anything you don't want to do. Your opinions matter and when you say "no," your date should stop.

WHEN NO DOESN'T WORK

Sometimes saying "no" will not stop a rape. Listed below are several ways you can react in a sexual violence situation. Thinking about what you would do before an assault ever happens can be your best self-defense strategy.

- ✓ *Act immediately.* Trust your intuition and get away, if possible. Don't give in to a person's sexual demands in the hope that you can divert him/her later on.
- ✓ *Stay calm.* Try to think clearly about all your options. Your brain is your best weapon.
- ✓ *Passive resistance.* You may be able to discourage the attacker by talking. Persuade him/her not to commit the assault by making him/her see you as a friend.
- ✓ *Active resistance.* If you are not afraid to hurt someone, hit and kick hard—this gives you the opportunity to escape. However, fighting back may anger the attacker and cause him/her to attack more brutally.
- ✓ *Self-defense training.* It can make you more confident and improve your physical strength. Training is effective, but it takes continuous practice. It is not a substitute for common sense and awareness.
- ✓ *Submitting.* Do whatever you have to do to keep yourself safe. If you feel your life is in danger, your best option may be to submit. Submitting does not mean you consented.

WAYS YOU CAN END SEXUAL ASSAULT

It is up to everyone to stop sexual violence. Here are several ways you can help prevent rape.

- ✓ *Do not make assumptions.* Don't assume that one form of sexual contact necessarily opens the door to other sexual contacts.
- ✓ *Separate desire from action.* Your desires may be beyond your control, but your actions are within your control. Sexual excitement does not justify forced sex.
- ✓ *Challenge sexist attitudes.* Challenge jokes by others about rape, sexual violence, or sexual harassment.
- ✓ *Educate yourself.* Read articles, essays, and books about gender inequality and the root causes of sexual violence.
- ✓ *Support efforts to end sexual violence.* Contact your local rape crisis center to find out how you can join with others to end sexual violence.
- ✓ *No means No.* Listen to and respect an individual's right to stop sexual activity.

