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Subject: **Governor Corbett Signs Bill to Toughen Sex Offender Law, Better Protect Children from Predators**
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News for Immediate Release

Dec. 20, 2011

Governor Corbett Signs Bill to Toughen Sex Offender Law, Better Protect Children from Predators

Harrisburg – Governor Tom Corbett today signed into law the “Adam Walsh Bill,” also known as Senate Bill 1183, which will strengthen the state’s rule on convicted sex offenders, by imposing tougher reporting standards.

The bill also closes loopholes in Pennsylvania’s current Megan’s Law that in the past allowed transient and certain out-of-state offenders to evade criminal prosecution by ignoring requirements for registering their home, school and work addresses with police.

“Megan’s Law is named for Megan Kanka, a New Jersey child murdered by a sexual predator. The Adam Walsh Law, as most everyone knows, is named for a Florida boy who was kidnapped at a department store and then murdered,” Corbett said.

“Megan’s and Adam’s families advocated for the bills named for their children.

“Children are irreplaceable. But we can hope that by making our laws tougher, we can spare others the pain and grief that has visited too many families in the many years since we named laws in memory of these lost youngsters,” Corbett said.

The new law also brings Pennsylvania into compliance with the federal Adam Walsh Act, which aims to coordinate efforts between states in monitoring and tracking sex offenders by making more information available on a centralized Internet database. Additional information includes DNA samples, palm prints and fingerprints, passport and expanded vehicle information.

Juvenile offenders convicted of serious sex offenses, such as rape, will also now be included in the required registration process. While their information and photos will not be available to the public, it will be available to law enforcement officials.

The measure also broadens Pennsylvania’s law to make sexual contact with students and children carry a criminal charge of institutional sexual assault for volunteers, employees and other adults in a school or center for children. The new law will also expand Megan’s Law to prevent group homes from housing more than five sexually violent predators.

Corbett commended the Pennsylvania State Police, the District Attorney’s Association, Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission, Sexual Offenders Assessment Board, Board of Probation and Parole and

Department of Corrections, all of whom advocated and supported these changes to state law.

Learn more and explore the Pennsylvania State Police Megan's Law registry online at www.pameganslaw.state.pa.us.

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