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**Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee
In Support of HB2071
January 20, 2021**

Chairman Patton and Committee Members:

Our associations support HB2071. Stalking victims suffer a great deal of psychological and emotional trauma from the fear of physical harm. That trauma is typically much more severe in children. Protecting our children from this kind of trauma should be a high priority. It would be difficult to surmise the emotional and psychological damage from the crime of stalking of a juvenile would not be greater than that of an adult.

In addition to the emotional distress, we should also consider what would motivate an adult to stalk a child under the age of 14. It certainly sounds like the act of a predator or the beginning of an attempt to pull a child into human trafficking could be a common theme. It could also be motivated by a desire directed at an adult by using the child as a means to that end. Either way is a very troubling scenario.

We believe that the increased penalty is well justified.

We urge the committee to move this bill forward.

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