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MADISON COUNTY, ILLINOIS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Media Advisory

WHO: Madison County Assistant State's Attorney speaking to students about the dangers involved in "sexting"

WHEN: Wednesday, November 12, 2014; multiple presentations in P.E. classes beginning at 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

WHERE: Trimpe Middle School, 910 Second Street, Bethalto, IL 62010; 618.377.7240

SIGNIFICANCE: Assistant State's Attorneys Amy Gabriel will be speaking to students at Trimpe Middle School on the dangers of sexting. The presentation will provide students with statistics on teens and sexting and those criminal statutes and penalties associated with sexting and child pornography. Additionally, high-profile cases will be discussed with the students in order to provide them with real-life examples. The Illinois School Code provides for an internet safety education curriculum to be utilized in Illinois Schools (720 ILCS 5/27-13.3)

Last year, State's Attorney Tom Gibbons announced the creation of a Children's Justice Division within his office in an effort to better coordinate his office's response to cases involving the children of Madison County. One of the goals in creating the division was to be more pro-active and communicate with children about important issues such as sexting. As a result, State's Attorney Gibbons began reaching out to local schools in order to teach children about the consequences involved in sexting. Gibbons hopes that if students are informed of the possible consequences of sexting, they will be equipped to make better decisions. "Sexting can be an extremely harmful action with devastating results," said Gibbons. "We hope that by talking with students now, we can stop dangerous and potentially criminal behavior." He added that most students do not realize that if they send an explicit photo via text or an app, they can be charged with a crime.

Assistant State's Attorney Gabriel heads the Children's Justice Division and she, along with Assistant State's Attorney Lauren Heischmidt who oversees the juvenile delinquency docket, will be speaking at schools throughout the district during the 2014-2015 school year. "Our intent with these presentation is to provide the kids with a reality check about their behavior while emphasizing that their actions often have very serious consequences," said Gabriel.

Earlier this year, Gabriel and Heischmidt spoke to students in several districts including Granite City, Collinsville, and Madison. Information on future presentations will be provided once scheduled.

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