

For Immediate Release

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**ADVOCATES VOICE CONCERN ABOUT FEWER REPORTED RAPES:
RESPONSE TO THE PA STATE POLICE UNIFORM CRIME REPORT**

ENOLA, Pa. – The Pennsylvania State Police released the 2003 Uniform Crime Report on Wednesday. Statewide, the number of reported forcible rapes is down, but anti-sexual violence advocates voice caution in analyzing the data.

“At first glance, I’d attribute the reduction to our work promoting prevention education, public awareness and risk reduction strategies,” said Delilah Rumburg, executive director of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape. “But I fear that the decrease could be a reflection of lowered reporting.”

In the summer of 2003, news of Kobe Bryant’s arrest for sexual assault and the ensuing backlash of contempt for the alleged victim spread across the country. Advocates contend that the general population’s response to the woman has left other victims fearful to come forward.

“We’ve heard stories from across the nation that rape victims are terrified to report crimes to the police,” said Rumburg. “They’ve witnessed the personal attacks that the alleged victim in Colorado received. They’ve heard their friends and family members put their total confidence in Kobe and dismiss the victim’s claims. They don’t want to go through the additional trauma they associate with filing a report.”

The UCR is a web-based reporting system set up by the Pennsylvania State Police for local law enforcement officials to voluntarily submit statistics on the number of reported crimes in their jurisdiction. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, less than 30% of rape victims report the crime to police.

“As thankful as we are for any sign that shows a possible decrease in crimes of sexual violence, we urge community members to be wary of making those judgments from the number of reported cases,” said Rumburg. “Our work is far from done.”

Founded in 1975, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape works to eliminate all forms of sexual violence and to advocate for the rights and needs of victims of sexual assault. PCAR works in conjunction with a statewide network of rape crisis centers to administer services to survivors and their families. On average, Pennsylvania rape crisis centers serve over 35,000 victims and their significant others each year. For more information on the rape crisis services available in your community, call (888) 772-PCAR.