

Kelley Hunt Smith STATEMENT (KAITLYN Hunt's mom)

Good afternoon. Thank you you're honor for allowing me to speak on my daughter Kate's behalf. Today Kate will enter into a criminal plea. I completely support my daughter and her decision because I love her and value her life and future. What I don't understand is how we got to this place today. Two teenager girls in high school together, meet become best friends, develop feelings for each other and make a mutual decision to explore those feelings. I know both of these girls, I have seen them together, I saw them giggly and smile, be silly, talk about their love of sports and music and just be kids. I saw that they cared for each other and valued each other very much. There was never any ill intent; there was never manipulation or cohesion of any kind. They were simply being normal teenagers. The girls mutually made some unwise choices, but they are good girls. They are smart, and talented. They are bright and happy. They had good grades in school and were respected by their peers and teachers. I don't now and never will understand why James and Laurie Smith never came to us with their concerns or worries. I will never understand why they didn't contact the school, reach out to the girl's guidance counselors, and set up a meeting, anything to be able to express to us their dislike of the girl's relationship. They didn't know Kate, they never talked to her, spent time with her, they judged and blamed her without any knowledge of the truth. They reacted emotional when finding out of the girls choices, in which they didn't agree with. I can understand concern, I can understand not liking your teenager's decisions but to go the route they did, I will never understand. They didn't give Kate or us a chance to remedy any of this. Having a young relative send Kate a FB message after the fact isn't a warning or a chance. Teenagers do thing we don't like, they mess up, and they make really dumb decision at times. But it's our job as parents to deal with them as a FAMILY. This whole situation could have been avoided if James and Laurie had to come to us as parents, and allowed us to deal with our children together. Kate disobeyed your order to have no contact with CS. She was wrong period. However it wasn't one sided. The girls wanted desperately to help each other, they didn't understand why they were being kept apart, and CS clearly wanted to save Kate from what her parents were doing. Kate has paid the highest price for her disobedience. She has been in jail for over 6 weeks, away from her family as a teenager, which has been the most horrific and horrible experience in her life. Kate has accepted responsibility for her disobiednce and makes no excuse. I firmly believe the laws in which Kate was arrested under need to change. I believe teenagers in high school together that have consensual relations should not be charged as felons. If we start arresting teenagers for having sex and sexting, labeling them predators and sex offenders, we would have to turn the schools into prisons. We may not like or agree with those issues but we need to educate and parent our children, not turn them over to the legal system. The last 8 months have been a horrible nightmare for our family. I went public to save my daughter, I knew I couldn't be the only one who thought was what happening was wrong, and I was right. Kate has hundreds of thousands of supporters all over the world, who feel like this case is a horrible misuse of the law and shouldn't be happening. Sadly along with all the support, we have gotten death threats, vile Internet bashings, and our entire lives picked a part and slandered. My other 4 children have been stalked and threatened, it's been horrifying. But at the end of the day we will continue to fight

for what is right. I want to protect any teen or their family from ever having to go thru what we have. I beg this court to look at this situation for what it truly is. If the guise under which this all started, was to truly protect CS from an older teen, then why is she now dating an 18 year old senior boy and its ok? If James and Laurie didn't want this to go to trial and subject CS to being on the stand, then why would they now be seeking money from us and homeowners insurance? If they didn't want Kate in jail, then why does she have to spend 3 more months there? It just doesn't make any sense, none of it. I pray both of these girls are somehow able to heal and recover from what's been done to them. I hate that my daughter has to suffer for three more years for a decision that her and her girlfriend made in high school as kids. I wish only the best for Kate and CS and their futures. Thank you, Kelley Hunt Smith