

ERIC J. SMITH
MACOMB COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

Dear Parents:

Few events hit home for students and families like a school shooting. When students learn of these events on television or on social media, it is natural for them to worry about their own school and their own safety. Unfortunately, some students see these tragedies as an opportunity to gain notoriety and make threats against their schools, teachers, and classmates.

Since the tragedy in Parkland, Florida, my office has received in excess of twenty reports from law enforcement agencies of students using social media to make threats against schools. Many of these threats turned out to be made by students who claim they were just joking or playing a prank. I want to be very clear: **these threats are no joke, and this behavior will not be tolerated.**

Over the past three weeks in Macomb County:

- 17 students have been charged;
- Each defendant has been charged with False Threat of Terrorism or Threat of Terrorism;
- Both of these charges are felonies that carry a sentence of up to 20 years in prison.

While the punishments dictated by the criminal justice system are stern, students may face additional consequences, including:

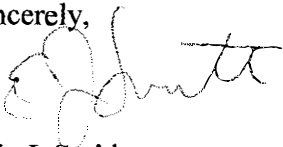
- Loss of scholarships and federal aid;
- Denied college admission;
- Being required to disclose pending cases or criminal convictions on job applications.

I urge you to talk to your children about the appropriate use of social media, and the lasting consequences of making threats against our schools. Please stress that there is nothing humorous about threatening to shoot up a school, and there is no such thing as a joke involving the threat of mass murder.

All threats will continue to be taken seriously and prosecuted to the fullest extent under the law.

By working together, we can provide our children the safe schools they deserve.

Sincerely,



Eric J. Smith
Macomb County Prosecuting Attorney