

An Open Letter To Chief State's Attorney Kevin T. Kane

The Julie Amero case has created outrage in internet forums and among computer experts all over the country. Briefly, Julie Amero was seven months pregnant and acting as a substitute seventh grade teacher in Norwich, Connecticut. She left the classroom briefly, and while she was gone some of her students used the class computer to surf the web. When she returned a stream of pornographic pop-up ads began to appear. She panicked and tried to stop the pop-ups but did not turn off the computer because she had been firmly instructed not to do so. She was charged with exposing her students to pornography and convicted in January. She now faces up to forty (40) years in prison.

Many computer experts believe that the stream of obscene pop-up ads were caused by malicious spyware and adware programs which users seldom know have infected their computers until too late - after they have done their evil work. It is most troubling that the computer had no firewall protection - apparently because a vendor's bill went unpaid - and that the prosecution did not make a search for spyware.

An excellent suggestion has been offered by Mark Rasch, former chief of the U.S. Department of Justice's cyber crime unit: "Find an independent investigator with no preconceived notions at all and find out what happened." We the undersigned computer science professors at Yale, UCONN, Wesleyan, Trinity, the University of Hartford, and the State Universities urge you to take up Mark Rasch's suggestion, and to delay sentencing Julie Amero until the investigator has filed his report.

Drew McDermott Yale	Thomas J. Peters UCONN	Neli Zlatareva CCSU
James Lipton Wesleyan	Ralph Morelli Trinity	Dong-Guk Shin UCONN
Ingrid Russell U Hartford	Chip Neville CCSU	G. Ganchev WCSU
Sarah Tasneem ECSU	Heidi Ellis Trinity	Bradley Kjell CCSU
John Ridgway Trinity	Todor Ivanov WCSU	Huan-Yu Tu ECSU
Brian O'Connell CCSU	Jian Lin ECSU	John Mertens Trinity
David Ahlgren Trinity	Kehan Gao ECSU	Taikang Ning Trinity
Stan Kurkovsky CCSU	Rathika RiVarma CCSU	Joan Calvert CCSU
Irena Pevac CCSU	R. White CCSU	Zdravko Markov CCSU
Passent El-Kafrawy ECSU		

Ad payed for by the signatories

This open letter first appeared as a public advocacy ad on page A4 of the March 6, 2007 edition of the Hartford Courant. Verbatim copies are permitted in any medium provided this and the following notices are preserved:

In response to prior news coverage and opinion posted on the internet concerning the Julie Amero case, misguided people have sent hateful and even threatening messages to the judge and prosecutor. Sending such messages to any person or official connected with the case is inappropriate, illegal, and harmful to Julie Amero's defense, SO DON'T DO IT!