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Serious consequences for nation

I COMMEND the media for highlighting the recent cases involving statutory rape. The adolescents and parents reading of such cases will become more aware of what's happening in society these days. Let us think of the consequences of reducing the age limit for children to give consent to sex.

We will have more unwanted pregnancies, more abandoned babies, more teenage girls dropping out of school, more young sex workers (especially when their boyfriends aban-

don them), more runaway girls and more HIV-infected girls. It has serious consequences for the nation.

There are not enough resources to support these girls. There is a huge stigma attached to them and their families.

As a former social worker with the Welfare Department and as a juvenile court adviser, I shudder to think of the consequences of such a move.

We see a great number of parents applying to send their

daughters, some of whom are as young as 13 years old, to rehabilitation centres.

This is because these girls are having sex with boys, some with multiple partners. In the case of statutory rape, we should not be interested in the circumstances of how or why the rape took place.

A rape is a rape. Whether the girl gave consent or not is irrelevant. She is below 16 years of age.

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