

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

22-280

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

March 6, 2018

To declare the month of April 2018 as “Sexual Assault Awareness Month” in the District of Columbia, and to urge residents to show their support for victim-survivors and work to prevent sexual assault, abuse, and harassment.

WHEREAS, women-organized protests against sexual violence began in the late 1970s in England with ‘Take Back the Night’ marches in direct response to the violence that women encountered as they walked the streets at night;

WHEREAS, these activities became more coordinated and soon developed into a movement that extended to the United States, and in 1978, the first “Take Back the Night” events in the United States were held in San Francisco and New York City;

WHEREAS, the movement that developed in the United States was also created in the wake of the civil rights movement, which was buoyed by Black women’s activism to disrupt the persistent and systemic sexual violence that they experienced;

WHEREAS, each member of the Washington, D.C., community shares the collective responsibility to promote the health and well-being of District residents by interrupting the cultural norms that allow sexual violence to occur;

WHEREAS, the month of April has been designated as Sexual Assault Awareness Month in the United States and was first observed nationally in April 2001, after the alarming statistics of sexual assaults and underreporting became more apparent;

WHEREAS, sexual assault awareness activities have expanded to include the issue of sexual violence against men and men’s participation in ending sexual violence;

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Justice’s National Crime Victimization Survey, every 98 seconds, someone in the United States is sexually assaulted;

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WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention's National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, one out of every 5 women has been the victim-survivor of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime;

WHEREAS, nearly 3 million men in the United States have been the victim-survivors of sexual assault or rape;

WHEREAS, girls 16 to 19 years of age are 4 times more likely than the general population to be victim-survivors of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault;

WHEREAS, women 18 to 24 years of age who are not in college are 4 times more likely to have experienced sexual violence than women in general;

WHEREAS, only 23% of rape or sexual assaults are reported to the police;

WHEREAS, victim-survivors of sexual assault are 3 times more likely to suffer from depression, 6 times more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, 13 times more likely to abuse alcohol, 26 times more likely to abuse drugs, and 4 times more likely to contemplate suicide;

WHEREAS, approximately 70% of sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim-survivor, and 45% of rapists are an acquaintance;

WHEREAS, 5% of rapists will reoffend within 3 years, and 24% of rapists will reoffend within 15 years;

WHEREAS, despite the prevalence of sexual violence and its disproportionate effect on at-risk populations, such as the LGBTQ community and victim-survivors with disabilities, sexual violence remains the most underreported crime;

WHEREAS, sexual violence exists on a spectrum of behaviors ranging from verbal harassment to sexual assault, it is imperative to recognize that sexual harassment in the workplace is a pervasive yet often overlooked manifestation of sexual violence;

WHEREAS, sexual harassment in the workplace is a form of discrimination which violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;

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WHEREAS, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace found that 45% of all workplace harassment complaints filed in 2015 were based on sex;

WHEREAS, 70% of people who are sexually harassed in the workplace never file a formal complaint;

WHEREAS, sexual harassment in the workplace has profound financial and social costs;

WHEREAS, sexual harassment victim-survivors exhibit detrimental psychological and physical health effects;

WHEREAS, bystanders to sexual harassment in the workplace are also psychologically impacted, thereby decreasing productivity and increasing staff turnover;

WHEREAS, at least one in 4 children have experienced child neglect or abuse (including physical, emotional, and sexual) at some point in their lives, and one in 7 children have experienced abuse or neglect in the last year;

WHEREAS, adverse childhood experiences like sexual trauma predisposes individuals to inflammatory and autoimmune diseases such as asthma, heart disease, fibromyalgia, Crohn's disease, type 1 diabetes, and rheumatoid arthritis;

WHEREAS, victim-survivors of childhood sexual abuse experience more depression, obesity, autoimmune diseases, eating disorders, and addictions;

WHEREAS, victim-survivors of child sexual abuse have higher rates of being sexually assaulted again as adults;

WHEREAS, in fact, children who had an experience of rape or attempted rape in their adolescent years are 13.7 times more likely to experience rape or attempted rape in their first year of college; and

WHEREAS, the District of Columbia now joins all 50 states, the territories, and other major cities in recognizing Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the "Sexual Assault Awareness Month Recognition Resolution of 2018".

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Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia recognizes and supports Sexual Assault Awareness Month, urges residents to show their support for victim-survivors and work to prevent sexual assault, abuse, and harassment, and declares the month of April 2018 as “Sexual Assault Awareness Month” in the District of Columbia.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in the District of Columbia Register.