

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

23-240

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

February 4, 2020

To recognize February as “Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month” in the District of Columbia.

WHEREAS, teen dating violence is an ongoing problem that affects youth in every community around the nation;

WHEREAS, the severity of intimate partner violence is often greater in cases where the pattern of abuse was established in adolescence;

WHEREAS, in the District of Columbia 35.3% of high school students and 26.6% of middle school students in 2019 reported experiences of dating violence, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse by someone they are dating or going out with in the past year; and

WHEREAS, young women between the ages of 16 and 24 are especially vulnerable to intimate partner violence, experiencing abuse at a rate almost triple the national average;

WHEREAS, one in three adolescent girls in the United States is a victim of physical, emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds victimization rates for other types of violence affecting youth;

WHEREAS, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning middle and high school students in the District of Columbia are more than two times more likely to report experiencing sexual, physical, and emotional violence from the person they are dating or going out with than their heterosexual peers;

WHEREAS, 89% of transgender youth nationally report experiences of dating violence;

WHEREAS, young people victimized by a dating partner are more likely to experience disrupted development of self-esteem and body image, resulting in unhealthy dieting behaviors, risky sexual behavior, and other unsafe practices;

ENROLLED ORIGINAL

WHEREAS, high school students who experience physical violence in a dating relationship are more likely to use drugs and alcohol, are at greater risk of suicide, and are much more likely to carry patterns of abuse into future relationships;

WHEREAS, witnessing violence has been associated with decreased school attendance and academic performance;

WHEREAS, nearly half of teens who experience dating violence report that incidents of abuse took place in a school building or on school grounds;

WHEREAS, only 33% of teens who are in an abusive relationship tell anyone about the abuse, and 82% of parents surveyed either believe teen dating violence is not an issue or admit they do not know if it is one;

WHEREAS, it is essential to raise community awareness and to provide training for teachers, counselors, and school staff so that they may recognize when youth are exhibiting signs of dating violence;

WHEREAS, by providing young people with education about healthy relationships and relationship skills and by changing attitudes that support violence, the Council recognizes that dating violence is preventable;

WHEREAS, Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month benefits young people, their families, schools, and communities, regardless of socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, or ethnicity, by bringing attention to the issue and the various forms it can take; and

WHEREAS, all residents of the District of Columbia have the right to a safe and healthy relationship and to be free from abuse.

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, that the Council affirms the right of every young person to have safe and healthy dating or intimate relationships and declares February 2020 as “Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month” in the District of Columbia.

Sec. 2. This resolution may be cited as the “Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month Recognition Resolution of 2020”.

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