

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

23-245

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

March 3, 2020

To declare the month of April 2020 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, harassment, and human trafficking.

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

WHEREAS, in the 1970s, the first “Take Back the Night” events in the United States were held in Philadelphia, 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, 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, sexual assault awareness includes prevention and advocacy efforts to address various forms of sexual violence, including childhood sexual abuse, sexual harassment, human trafficking, and rape;

WHEREAS, according to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, sex trafficking reports or supports have been the highest human trafficking need for hotline callers since 2012;

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WHEREAS, according to the Administration for Children and Families, racial and ethnic minorities, communities exposed to multigenerational trauma, individuals with a history of substance abuse, runaways, homeless youth, the poor, and children in the child welfare system as well as those with a history of sexual abuse are identified as some of the groups most vulnerable to human trafficking;

WHEREAS, according to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (“NCMEC”), of the more than 23,500 endangered runaways reported to NCMEC in 2019, one in six were likely victims of child sex trafficking;

WHEREAS, according to research conducted by World Without Exploitation, between 33% and 84% of victims of commercial sexual exploitation are survivors of childhood sexual abuse;

WHEREAS, the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse in samples of victims of commercial sexual exploitation is 3 times to 9 times higher than that of the general population;

WHEREAS, 30.8% of sex trafficking victims 12 through 18 years of age had a history of sexual violence;

WHEREAS, 87% of youth involved in commercial sexual exploitation coupled with a history of sexual abuse are runaways;

WHEREAS, 68% of adolescents that were victims of commercial sexual exploitation were sexually abused during childhood;

WHEREAS, 7.8 years is the average age at which sexual victimization begins for girls in the sex trade;

WHEREAS, according to the FBI, almost 59% of all juvenile prostitution arrests involve Black children;

WHEREAS, according to the Statistical Analysis Center for the District, Black girls in their teens and twenties in the District of Columbia were the largest proportion of trafficking victims in 2016;

WHEREAS, according to the Journal of American Health Behavior (“JAHB”), 44% of women engaged in sex work in the District reported unwanted sexual contact as children;

WHEREAS, according to the JAHB, 44% of sex-trade involved women had been raped while in the sex trade, and customers committed 60% of those rapes;

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WHEREAS, according to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (“RAINN”), every 73 seconds, someone in the United States is sexually assaulted;

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention’s (“CDC”) National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 1 out of every 5 women has been the victim-survivor of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime;

WHEREAS, according to RAINN, in the United States, 1 out of every 10 rape victims are men;

WHEREAS, according to RAINN, 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, according to RAINN, women 18 to 24 years of age who are not in college are 3 times more likely to have experienced sexual violence than women in general;

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

WHEREAS, survivors who feel that they have been treated fairly, and afforded their rights on paper and in practice, tend to experience less secondary victimization, and have greater respect for and satisfaction with the justice system;

WHEREAS, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s (“EEOC”) 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, according to the EEOC, only 6% to 13% of individuals who experience harassment file a formal complaint;

WHEREAS, according to the EEOC, sexual harassment victim-survivors experience detrimental psychological and physical health effects;

WHEREAS, according to the CDC, 1 in 7 children have experienced abuse or neglect in the last year; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Center for Victims of Crimes, victim-survivors of child sexual abuse have higher rates of being sexually assaulted again as adults, and 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.

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RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Sexual Assault Awareness Month Recognition Resolution of 2020”.

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 2020 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.