

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

23-345

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

December 1, 2020

To recognize the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers, and to declare Thursday December 17, 2020, as “International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers” in the District of Columbia.

WHEREAS, sex workers, or people who offer sexual services in exchange for something of value, are disproportionately targeted for violence around the globe and in the District of Columbia;

WHEREAS, criminalization of sex work and the accompanying stigma lead to sex workers being viewed as less worthy of having their human rights respected and protected, as exemplified by the comments of Gary Ridgeway, the Green River Killer, after admitting to the murders of over 70 women in Washington State, “I picked prostitutes because I thought I could kill as many of them as I wanted without getting caught”;

WHEREAS, sex workers organized the first International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers on the date of Ridgeway’s conviction, to draw attention to the impunity with which people commit violence against sex workers, and the obstacles sex workers face when attempting to report violence;

WHEREAS, studies in the U.S. have revealed that as many as 80% of street-based sex workers have faced violence in the course of their work;

WHEREAS, research in the District of Columbia has found that more than half of sex workers who reached out to police for help received negative reactions, and 1 in 10 had been subject to physical or sexual violence at the hands of law enforcement;

WHEREAS, this violence disproportionately affects people involved in commercial sex who are marginalized in other ways, such as women, people of color, transgender individuals, migrants, and young people;

WHEREAS, the District of Columbia strives to be a city that is welcoming and safe for all residents and visitors, and ending violence in our communities is a high priority;

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WHEREAS, the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers is commemorated on December 17 around the world; and

WHEREAS, in the District of Columbia, a memorial event is usually planned by community members and organizations to recognize International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers Recognition Resolution of 2020”.

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia recognizes the human rights of sex workers, including their right to be free from violence, and declares Thursday, December 17, 2020 as “International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers” in the District of Columbia.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.