

112TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. RES. 535

Expressing support for designation of the month of February 2011 as
“National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month”.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 1, 2012

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia (for himself, Ms. MOORE, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. NORTON, Mr. SABLAN, and Mr. CONYERS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for designation of the month of February 2011 as “National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month”.

Whereas while dating, domestic, and sexual violence and stalking affect women regardless of age, teens and young women are especially vulnerable;

Whereas according to the recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence survey, the majority of victimization starts early in life as most rape and intimate partner violence is first experienced before age 24;

Whereas according to Liz Claiborne’s 2009 Parent/Teen Dating Violence Poll, approximately 1 in 3 adolescent girls in the United States is a victim of physical, emotional,

or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a rate that far exceeds victimization rates for other types of violence affecting youth;

Whereas according to the CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), nearly 10 percent of high school students have been hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend in the past year;

Whereas according to the American Journal of Public Health, more than 1 in 4 teenagers have been in a relationship where a partner is verbally abusive;

Whereas according to data from the YRBSS, almost 20 percent of teen girls who were exposed to physical dating violence did not attend school on 1 or more occasions during the past 30 days due to feeling unsafe at school or on the way to or from school;

Whereas violent relationships in adolescence can have serious ramifications for victims, putting them at higher risk for substance abuse, eating disorders, risky sexual behavior, suicide, and adult revictimization;

Whereas being physically and sexually abused leaves teen girls up to 6 times more likely to become pregnant and more than twice as likely to contract a sexually transmitted disease;

Whereas according to a recent study published in the Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, more than half of teens and young adults treated at an inner-city emergency room said they had been a victim or perpetrator of dating violence;

Whereas nearly 3 in 4 "tweens", individuals who are between the ages of 11 and 14, report that dating relationships

usually begin at age 14 or younger and about 72 percent of eighth and ninth graders report “dating”;

Whereas 1 in 5 tweens say that their friends are victims of dating violence, and nearly half of tweens who are in relationships know friends who are verbally abused;

Whereas more than 3 times as many tweens (20 percent) as parents of tweens (6 percent) admit that parents know little or nothing about the dating relationships of tweens;

Whereas according to Liz Claiborne Inc.’s 2009 Parent/Teen Dating Violence Poll, although 82 percent of parents are confident that they could recognize the signs if their child was experiencing dating abuse, a majority of parents (58 percent) could not correctly identify all the warning signs of abuse;

Whereas 74 percent of teenage boys and 66 percent of teenage girls say that they have not had a conversation with a parent about dating abuse in the past year;

Whereas according to a National Crime Prevention Council survey, 43 percent of middle and high school students reported experiencing cyberbullying in the past year;

Whereas 1 in 4 teens in a relationship say that they have been called names, harassed, or put down by their partner through cellphones and texting;

Whereas 3 in 10 young people have “sexted”, and 61 percent of young people who have “sexted” report being pressured to do so at least once;

Whereas according to Liz Claiborne Inc.’s 2010 College Dating Violence and Abuse Poll, 43 percent of dating college women who date report experiencing violent and abusive dating behaviors;

Whereas 70 percent of college students who were in an abusive relationship failed to realize that they were in an abusive relationship, and 60 percent of such students said that no one stepped in to help them;

Whereas the severity of violence among intimate partners has been shown to be greater in cases where the pattern of violence was established in adolescence;

Whereas primary prevention programs are a key part of addressing teen dating violence, and many successful examples of such programs include education, community outreach, and social marketing campaigns that are culturally appropriate;

Whereas educating middle school students and their parents about the importance of building healthy relationships and preventing teen dating violence is key to deterring abuse before it begins;

Whereas skilled assessment and intervention programs are also necessary for youth victims and abusers; and

Whereas the establishment of National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month will benefit schools, communities, and families regardless of socioeconomic status, race, or sex: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—
- 2 (1) supports the designation “National Teen
- 3 Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month”;
- 4 (2) supports communities in empowering teens
- 5 to develop healthier relationships throughout their
- 6 lives; and

1 (3) calls upon the people of the United States,
2 including youth, parents, schools, law enforcement,
3 State and local officials, and interested groups to ob-
4 serve National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and
5 Prevention Month with appropriate programs and
6 activities that promote awareness and prevention of
7 teen dating violence in their communities.

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