

No. R-98. House concurrent resolution recognizing April 5, 2023 as Start by Believing Day in Vermont.

(H.C.R.79)

Offered by: Representatives Rachelson of Burlington, Andriano of Orwell, Arsenault of Williston, Bluemle of Burlington, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Burditt of West Rutland, Chapin of East Montpelier, Christie of Hartford, Cina of Burlington, Dolan of Essex Junction, Goslant of Northfield, Graning of Jericho, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Burlington, LaLonde of South Burlington, Logan of Burlington, Mulvaney-Stanak of Burlington, Oliver of Sheldon, Stebbins of Burlington, and Stone of Burlington

Whereas, the State of Vermont shares a strong concern with the victims of domestic and sexual violence for their well-being and desires to support their needs for justice and healing, and

Whereas, in 2022, the member organizations of the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence received a total of 19,811 hotline calls and served over 8,000 survivors of domestic and sexual violence, and

Whereas, victims of domestic and sexual violence are far more likely to disclose their sexual assault to a friend or family member, and when these loved ones respond with doubt, shame, or blame, victims suffer additional negative physical and psychological effects, and

Whereas, the Start by Believing public awareness campaign (a program of End Violence Against Women International) is designed to improve the responses of friends, family members, and community professionals so that they can help victims to access supportive resources and engage the criminal justice system, and

Whereas, in 2015, the first Start by Believing Day was established in Utah, and

Whereas, observing Start by Believing Day in Vermont will raise public awareness of the serious challenges that victims of domestic and sexual assaults encounter in accessing supportive resources and the criminal justice system, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly recognizes April 5, 2023 as Start by Believing Day in Vermont, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.