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A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

25-177

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

February 6, 2024

To declare the month of April 2024 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, online harassment, and sex trafficking.

WHEREAS, in 1978, the first “Take Back the Night” events in the United States were held in San Francisco and New York City;

WHEREAS, the movement that developed in the United States was created in the wake of the civil rights movement, and was buoyed by Black women’s activism to disrupt the persistent and systemic sexual violence 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 assault and underreporting became more apparent;

WHEREAS, sexual assault awareness includes prevention and advocacy efforts to address various forms of sexual violence, including child sexual abuse, sexual harassment, online sexual harassment, sex trafficking, and rape;

WHEREAS, sexual assault awareness activities have expanded to include the issues of sexual violence against men and men’s participation in ending sexual violence;

WHEREAS, sexual violence exists on a spectrum of behaviors, ranging from verbal harassment to online 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, according to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, every 68 seconds, someone in the United States is sexually assaulted;

WHEREAS, according to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 39% of women will have experienced sexual assault at some point in their lifetimes in the District of Columbia;

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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, with children who had an experience of rape or attempted rape in their adolescent years being 13.7 times more likely to experience rape or attempted rape in their first year of college;

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, among adult women surveyed, 22% of Black, 26.9% of American Indian/Alaska Native, 22% of non-Hispanic Black, 18.8% of non-Hispanic White, 14.6% of Hispanic, and 35.5% of women of multiple races experienced an attempted or a completed rape at some time in their lives;

WHEREAS, according to the Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence, 23% of Asian/Pacific Islander women experience some form of contact sexual violence;

WHEREAS, according to research published by the Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law and Policy, married immigrant women experience higher levels of physical and sexual abuse than unmarried immigrant women, at rates of 59.5% compared to 49.8%, respectively;

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime, 12% of transgender youth report being sexually assaulted in K–12 settings by peers or educational staff, 13% of African-American transgender people surveyed were sexually assaulted in the workplace, and 22% of homeless transgender individuals were assaulted while staying in shelters;

WHEREAS, according to the National Sexual Violence Research Center, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people were three times more likely to report sexual violence or harassment compared to heterosexual people;

WHEREAS, in deaf communities, reliance on interpreters may create challenges, as some sexual assault survivors feel like their private experiences are not correctly represented and feel uncomfortable reporting their assault to a stranger outside of their community;

WHEREAS, the rate of sexual assault against people with disabilities was three times that of people without disabilities;

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 or leaving home, homeless youth, people with lived experience of poverty, 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; and

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WHEREAS, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace found that 45% of all workplace harassment complaints filed in Fiscal Year 2015 were based on sex, and that sexual harassment victim-survivors experience detrimental psychological and physical health effects.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Sexual Assault Awareness Month Recognition Resolution of 2024”.

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia declares the month of April 2024 as “Sexual Assault Awareness Month” in the District of Columbia and urges residents to show their support for victim-survivors and work to prevent sexual assault, abuse, harassment, online harassment, and sex trafficking.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.