

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

23-59

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

April 2, 2019

To declare the month of April 2019 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, and harassment.

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

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 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 varying 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;

WHEREAS, according to the Administration for Children and Families, racial and ethnic minorities, communities exposed to multigenerational trauma, individuals with a history of

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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 2018, one in 7 were likely victims of child sex trafficking;

WHEREAS, according to research conducted by World Without Exploration, 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 in childhood;

WHEREAS, 7.8 years is the average age of sexual victimization to begin for girls in the sex trade;

WHEREAS, according to the FBI, almost 53% of all juvenile prostitution arrests involve black children;

WHEREAS, in the District of Columbia, black girls in their teens and twenties were the largest proportion of trafficking victims in 2016;

WHEREAS, 44% of women engaged in street prostitution in the District of Columbia reported unwanted sexual contact as children;

WHEREAS, in the District of Columbia, 44% of sex-trade involved women had been raped while in the sex trade and 60% of those rapes were committed by customers;

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Justice’s National Crime Victimization Survey, every 98 seconds, someone in the United States is sexually assaulted;

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

WHEREAS, according to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, nearly 3 million men in the United States have been the victim-survivors of sexual assault or rape;

WHEREAS, according to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, 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 the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, women 18 to 24 years of age who are not in college are 4 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, 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, 70% of people who are sexually harassed in the workplace never file a formal complaint;

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

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at least one in 4 children have experienced child neglect or abuse (including physical, emotional, and sexual) at some point in their lives, and one 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 2019”.

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 2019 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.