

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 245

Designating the month of April, in 2015 and in each succeeding year, as Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Virginia.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 2, 2015

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 24, 2015

WHEREAS, sexual violence is a very serious public health problem and, together with the related problems of unwanted sexual contact and verbal sexual harassment, is a major human rights and social justice issue affecting millions of women, men, and children in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the risk of sexual violence is not limited to interactions with strangers; perpetrators can include current and former intimate partners, a family member, a friend or acquaintance, or a known individual in a position of power or trust; and

WHEREAS, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 1 in 5 women and 1 in 71 men have been raped in their lifetime; approximately 1 in 20 women and men have experienced sexual violence other than rape; and 13 percent of women and 6 percent of men have experienced sexual coercion during their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported that, nationally, 37.4 percent of female rape victims were first raped between ages 18 and 24, and a study of undergraduate women found that 19 percent of study participants had experienced attempted or completed sexual assault since entering college; of female rape victims, 42.2 percent were raped before age 18 (29.9 percent were between the ages of 11 and 17 and 12.3 percent were younger than 11); and 27.8% of male rape victims were younger than 11; and

WHEREAS, sexual violence can have long-term physical and mental health consequences, including sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancy, anger, stress, distrust of others, eating disorders, depression, and suicide; and

WHEREAS, the recognition of the month of April as national Sexual Assault Awareness Month traces its roots to "Take Back the Night," organized women's protests against sexual violence during the 1970s in England; the coordinated activities expanded to protest sexual violence against men and women and evolved into a global movement that took hold in the United States; and

WHEREAS, during the national Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April each year, the National Sexual Violence Resource Center and other interested local, state, and national groups partner to highlight the problem of sexual violence, educate the public, and advocate for the prevention of sexual violence; and

WHEREAS, many states and organizations join the effort each year to raise awareness of the causes, effects, and prevention of sexual violence, and the theme in 2015 is "Safer Campuses, Brighter Futures, Prevent Sexual Violence"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly designate the month of April, in 2015 and in each succeeding year, as Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to the advisory council of the National Sexual Violence Resource Center and to Deborah D. Tucker, executive director of the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence, so that members of the organizations may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the Senate post the designation of this month on the General Assembly's website.

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