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SR-89 (2023-2024)

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ENROLLED APRIL 29, 2024

PASSED IN SENATE APRIL 25, 2024

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2023–2024 REGULAR SESSION

SENATE RESOLUTION

NO. 89

Introduced by Senator Rubio

(Coauthors: Senators Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Ashby, Atkins, Blakespear, Caballero, Dodd, Durazo, Eggman, Gonzalez, Grove, Hurtado, Laird, Limón, Menjivar, Nguyen, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Portantino, Skinner, Smallwood-Cuevas, Umberg, Wahab, Wiener, and Wilk)

April 16, 2024

Relative to Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SR 89, Rubio.

WHEREAS, In 2019, California rape crisis centers provided direct crisis intervention services to 40,039 individuals and provided community education for 179,061 people; and

WHEREAS, People of all genders and ages are victims of sexual assault, and it is estimated that nearly one in two women and one in five men experience sexual violence other than rape throughout their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey reports that there are over 22 million survivors of rape throughout the United States, with 2 million of those survivors of rape currently living in the State of California; and

WHEREAS, According to ValorUS, formerly the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault, an estimated one million California residents are known to be sexually assaulted each year; and

WHEREAS, Rape and sexual assault impact people of all racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, People of all genders and ages suffer multiple types of sexual violence, including acquaintance rape, stranger rape, sexual assault by an intimate partner, gang rape, incest, serial rape, sexual harassment, child sexual abuse, sex trafficking, and stalking; and

WHEREAS, In addition to the immediate physical and emotional costs, sexual assault survivors too frequently suffer from severe and long-lasting consequences, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, major depression, homelessness, eating disorders, low self-esteem, and suicide; and

WHEREAS, The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified sexual assault as a significant, costly, and preventable health issue; and

WHEREAS, A coalition of rape crisis centers and their allies, known as ValorUS, continues to directly confront this crisis with the cooperation of community advocates, health care providers, institutions of higher education, law enforcement, and other allied professionals from California's diverse communities; and

WHEREAS, It is our responsibility to support all rape survivors by treating them with dignity, compassion, and respect; and

WHEREAS, It is important to recognize the compassion and dedication of the individuals involved in this effort, applaud their commitment to foster healing, and increase public understanding of this significant problem; and

WHEREAS, It is important to recognize the strength, courage, and challenges of the victims and survivors of sexual assault and their families and friends as they struggle to cope with the reality of sexual assault; and

WHEREAS, It is important to recognize that not all victims of sexual assault survive, either at the time of the assault or later, due to the horrific long-term trauma that sexual assault often inflicts upon victims; and

WHEREAS, There are rape prevention and education efforts underway throughout California to challenge the societal myths and behaviors that perpetuate rape and to engage communities in a common goal of ending sexual assault; and

WHEREAS, It is crucial to hold perpetrators responsible for sexual attacks and to prevent sexual violence at every opportunity; and

WHEREAS, In 1998, the Italian Supreme Court overturned the conviction of a man who sexually assaulted an 18-year-old woman after the court determined that, "because the victim wore very, very tight jeans, she had to help him remove them, and by removing the jeans it was no longer rape but consensual sex"; and

WHEREAS, Enraged by the court decision, within a matter of hours, the women in the Italian Parliament launched into immediate action and protested by wearing jeans to work; and

WHEREAS, Nations and states throughout the world have followed the lead of the Italian Parliament by designating their own "Denim Day" to raise public awareness about rape and sexual assault; and

WHEREAS, Harmful attitudes about rape and sexual assault allow these crimes to persist and allow survivors to be revictimized through victim-blaming attitudes and sometimes unresponsive government systems; and

WHEREAS, California is a national leader in promoting victim-centered approaches within the judicial, criminal justice, medical, rape crisis, and health communities; and

WHEREAS, In 2021, California joined the States of New Hampshire and Florida in fulfilling the promise of Denim Day by approving and enacting Assembly Bill 939 (Chapter 529 of the Statutes of 2021), which prohibits a survivor's manner of dress from serving as evidence of consent in sexual assault cases; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, That the Senate designates the month of April 2024 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate recognizes April 24, 2024, as Denim Day in California and encourages everyone to wear jeans on that day to help communicate the message that there is no excuse for, and never an invitation to commit, rape; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.