



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING APRIL AS NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH AND APRIL 27th, 2022, AS “DENIM DAY”

WHEREAS, April is National Sexual Assault Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, according to National statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men in the United States of America (U.S.) have experienced sexual violence involving physical contact; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that nearly 1 in 5 women and 1 in 38 men have experienced completed or attempted rape during their lifetimes; and

WHEREAS, according to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) on average, there are 433,648 victims of rape and sexual assault each year in the United States of America (U.S.); and

WHEREAS, the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) data assures that every 73 seconds, an American is sexually assaulted; and

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Statistics National Crime Victimization Survey: only 230 of every 1,000 rapes are reported, only 46 of every 1,000 rapes lead to arrest, and only 5 of every 1,000 rapes lead to conviction in the United States of America (U.S.); and

WHEREAS, the Harvard Medical School Center for Primary Care has reported a significant worldwide increase in sexual violence cases since the surge of the Covid-19 Pandemic; and

WHEREAS, for the past 23 years, Peace Over Violence, a sexual and domestic violence prevention center headquartered in Los Angeles, California, has hosted the Denim Day campaign on a Wednesday in April in honor of Sexual Assault Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, the Denim Day story begins in Italy in 1992, when an 18-year-old girl was raped by the 45-year-old driving instructor who was taking her on her very first driving lesson. He took her to an isolated road, pulled her out of the car, removed her jeans and raped her; and

WHEREAS, after she reported the rape, the perpetrator was arrested, prosecuted, and convicted of rape and sentenced to jail; and

WHEREAS, years later, that conviction was overturned by the Italian Supreme Court using the “jeans alibi” - according to the justices, the woman was wearing tight jeans, therefore she must have helped the person who raped her remove her jeans, thereby implying consent; and

WHEREAS, the following day, the women in the Italian Parliament came to work wearing jeans in solidarity with the survivor; and

WHEREAS, the Denim Day campaign became official in the United States of America (U.S.) in 1999 where people

wore denim in solidarity with women in the Italian Parliament; and

WHEREAS, since then, wearing jeans or other denim apparel on Denim Day has become a symbol of protest against erroneous and destructive manners about sexual harassment, abuse, assault and rape; and

WHEREAS, in this sexual violence prevention and education campaign, community members, elected officials, businesses and students are asked to make a social statement by wearing denim on this day as a visible protest against the misconceptions that surround sexual violence.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners recognizes Wednesday, April 27, 2022, as the 23rd Annual Denim Day and uses this opportunity to bring awareness to this issue and advocacy for survivors.