



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 24th, 2024, 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, according to the CDC, 47% of transgender people experience sexual violence; 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 RAINN data assures that every 68 seconds, an American is sexually assaulted, and every 9 minutes, that victim is a child; and

WHEREAS, according to RAINN: only 310 of every 1,000 rapes are reported, only 50 of every 1,000 rapes lead to arrest, and only 25 of every 1,000 rapes lead to conviction in the United States of America (U.S.); and

WHEREAS, according to RAINN, of sexual abuse cases reported to law enforcement, 93% of juvenile victims knew the perpetrator, 59% were acquaintances, 34% were family members, 7% were strangers to the victim; and

WHEREAS, among graduate and professional students, 9.7% of females and 2.5% of males experience rape or sexual assault through physical force, violence, or incapacitation; and

WHEREAS, among undergraduate students, 26.4% of females and 6.8% of males experience rape or sexual assault through physical force, violence, or incapacitation; 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 24 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 survivors; 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 of 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 24, 2024, as the 25th Annual Denim Day and uses this opportunity to bring awareness to this issue and advocate for survivors.