

Date of Hearing: April 15, 2024

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON RULES
Blanca Pacheco, Chair
HR 85 (Cervantes) – As Introduced April 1, 2024

SUBJECT: Sexual assault.

SUMMARY: Designates the month of April 2024 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and recognizes April 24, 2024, as Denim Day in California. Specifically, **this resolution** makes the following legislative findings:

- 1) In 2019, California rape crisis centers provided direct crisis intervention services to 40,039 individuals and provided community education for 179,061 people.
- 2) 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.
- 3) 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, they 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.
- 4) The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified sexual assault as a significant, costly, and preventable health issue.
- 5) 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.
- 6) It is our responsibility to support all rape survivors by treating them with dignity, compassion, and respect. 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.
- 7) 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." 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.
- 8) 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.

- 9) 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.
- 10) California is a national leader in promoting victim-centered approaches within the judicial, criminal justice, medical, rape crisis, and health communities.
- 11) 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.

FISCAL EFFECT: None

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file

Opposition

None on file

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