

Commonwealth of Massachusetts



A Proclamation

His Excellency Governor Deval L. Patrick

Whereas Non-stranger and stranger rape and sexual assault affect women, children and men of all racial, cultural, educational and economic backgrounds throughout the Commonwealth, the nation and the world; and

Whereas In in FY2013, 2,319 unduplicated incidents of sexual assault were reported to the seventeen Massachusetts Department of Public Health funded Rape Crisis Centers and Llámanos, the statewide Spanish language helpline; and

Whereas According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 1 in 3 women and 1 in 5 men in Massachusetts have experienced sexual violence victimization other than rape, and 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men in Massachusetts have experienced rape, physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lives; and

Whereas Freedom from sexual violence is a human right; and

Whereas Students who experience sexual contact against their will exhibit higher rates of many risk behaviors, such as considering or attempting suicide, sexual intercourse or driving a vehicle while intoxicated, and display significantly lower academic achievement than their peers; and

Whereas The prevention of sexual assault requires a culture that rejects the abuse of power and goes to the very root of the problem by promoting respect and equality in our relationships, our families, our institutions, and our societies along with healthy sexuality and empowerment; and

Whereas Linguistically, culturally and community-relevant outreach and prevention services are needed to address the barriers and concerns often experienced by marginalized communities, including people of color, people with disabilities, immigrants and people who are LGBTQ/T; and

Whereas There is a growing cadre of young people in high schools and on college campuses who are stepping up to promote healthy relationships and say no to violence of all kinds; and

Whereas Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships Initiative is a shining example of this movement, focusing on 11 to 18-year-olds and working to prevent teen dating violence and abuse by involving teens, parents, caregivers, educators, healthcare professionals, domestic violence advocates, and community leaders to build environments that support healthy relationships and ensure violence and abuse are never tolerated,

Now, Therefore, I, Deval L. Patrick, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do hereby proclaim April 2014, to be,

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

And urge all the citizens of the Commonwealth to take cognizance of this event and participate fittingly in its observance.

Given at the Executive Chamber in Boston, this thirty-first day of March, in the year two thousand and fourteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the two hundred and thirty-seventh.

By His Excellency

DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH

WILLIAM FRANCIS GALVIN
SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH

God Save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts