

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 394 Session of 2024

INTRODUCED BY McNEILL, KINSEY, HILL-EVANS, POWELL, HOHENSTEIN, GIRAL, CERRATO, KINKEAD, PROBST, VITALI, KHAN, M. MACKENZIE, HOWARD, NEILSON, HADDOCK, DELLOSO, CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, O'MARA AND CURRY, APRIL 11, 2024

AS AMENDED, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, APRIL 30, 2024

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the month of April 2024 as "Sexual Assault Awareness
2 Month" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, April is nationally recognized as "Sexual Assault
4 Awareness Month" to call attention to the fact that sexual
5 violence is widespread and impacts every community; and

6 WHEREAS, April 2024 is the 23rd anniversary of the first
7 recognition of "Sexual Assault Awareness Month"; and

8 WHEREAS, Prior to the first "Sexual Assault Awareness Month,"
9 social activists brought the realities of the prevalence of
10 sexual violence to the forefront of public perception; and

11 WHEREAS, During the civil rights era, although the realities
12 of sexual assault and domestic violence all too often went
13 unspoken, challenges to social injustices opened the door to
14 begin tough conversations about the intersections of race-based
15 and gender-based violence; and

16 WHEREAS, The 1970s saw the establishment of the first rape
17 crisis center in San Francisco and the first Take Back the Night

1 event which protested all forms of sexual violence; and

2 WHEREAS, The reality of sexual violence received nationwide
3 recognition with the passage of the Violence Against Women Act
4 in 1993; and

5 WHEREAS, Before the first nationally observed "Sexual Assault
6 Awareness Month" in 2001, advocates held events and observances
7 related to sexual violence, including "Sexual Assault Awareness
8 Weeks," during the month of April; and

9 WHEREAS, The National Sexual Violence Resource Center has
10 designated the theme of "Sexual Assault Awareness Month" 2024 to
11 be "Building Connected Communities" to recognize the value of
12 communities that take care of one another and that make
13 decisions to protect the well-being of all their members; and

14 WHEREAS, Sexual violence, which includes rape, sexual assault
15 and sexual harassment, continues to have a deep physical and
16 emotional trauma on those who have experienced it; and

17 WHEREAS, Rape in the United States occurs more frequently
18 than the public realizes, as 1 in 5 women and 1 in 67 men have
19 been raped in the United States; and

20 WHEREAS, ~~Someone~~ ACCORDING TO THE RAPE, ABUSE & INCEST <--
21 NATIONAL NETWORK (RAINN), SOMEONE in the United States is the
22 victim of sexual assault every ~~98~~ 68 seconds; and <--

23 WHEREAS, On postsecondary campuses, 1 in 5 women and 1 in 16
24 men are sexually assaulted at some point in their educational
25 career, and 90% of sexual assaults on college campuses go
26 unreported; and

27 WHEREAS, Young people experience disproportionate rates of
28 sexual violence with close to 70% of all reported incidents of
29 sexual violence involving a child under 18 years of age; and

30 WHEREAS, ~~One in six~~ ACCORDING TO RAINN, ONE IN TWENTY boys <--

1 and one in ~~four~~ NINE girls experience some form of sexual <--
2 violence before they turn 18 years of age; and

3 WHEREAS, ~~Close to 30%~~ THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION AND <--
4 THE NATIONAL CENTERS FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME ESTIMATE THAT NEARLY
5 22% of non-Hispanic Black women in the United States are
6 survivors of rape; and

7 WHEREAS, More than 80% of American Indian and Alaska Native
8 women have experienced some form of personal violence in their
9 lives, WHICH MAY INCLUDE SEXUAL ABUSE; and <--

10 WHEREAS, More than 30% of Hispanic women have reported
11 experiencing unwanted sexual contact; and

12 WHEREAS, Lesbian and bisexual women experience sexual and
13 physical violence by intimate partners at a significantly higher
14 rate compared to straight women; and

15 WHEREAS, ~~Gay~~ ACCORDING TO THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND <--
16 PREVENTION, GAY and bisexual men are ~~up to 15 times~~ 1.9 AND 2.3 <--
17 TIMES, RESPECTIVELY, more likely than heterosexual men to report
18 having been sexually assaulted; and

19 WHEREAS, Nearly half of all transgender people experience
20 some form of sexual violence throughout their lifetime; and

21 WHEREAS, More than 90% of individuals with a developmental
22 disability experience sexual violence at least once in their
23 lifetime, and 49% experience 10 or more sexually abusive
24 incidents throughout their lives; and

25 WHEREAS, Only 27% of all incidents of sexual violence end in
26 arrest; and

27 WHEREAS, HUMAN TRAFFICKERS COMMONLY USE SEXUAL VIOLENCE TO <--
28 EXERT CONTROL OVER WOMEN, CHILDREN AND MEN; AND

29 WHEREAS, THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE ESTIMATES THAT
30 THERE ARE 27.6 MILLION VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING PRESENT IN

1 THE WORLD AT ANY GIVEN TIME; AND

2 WHEREAS, ACCORDING TO THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
3 JUSTICE, A TOTAL OF 2,027 INDIVIDUALS WERE REFERRED TO UNITED
4 STATES ATTORNEYS FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING OFFENSES IN 2021, A 49%
5 INCREASE FROM THE 1,360 INDIVIDUALS REFERRED IN 2011; AND

6 WHEREAS, THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COURTS
7 REPORTED THAT 809 HUMAN TRAFFICKING OFFENSES WERE FILED IN THE
8 COURTS OF THIS COMMONWEALTH BETWEEN 2018 AND 2022; AND

9 WHEREAS, SINCE 2007, THE NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE
10 HAS IDENTIFIED 1,897 CASES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING INVOLVING 4,048
11 VICTIMS IN THIS COMMONWEALTH; AND

12 WHEREAS, INDIVIDUALS WHO SEXUALLY ABUSE OTHERS SHOULD BE
13 SUBJECT TO HEIGHTENED CRIMINAL PENALTIES UNDER THE LAWS OF THIS
14 COMMONWEALTH; AND

15 WHEREAS, Communities can support survivors by believing their
16 stories, showing respect and championing their individual
17 support networks; and

18 WHEREAS, Individuals speaking out against inappropriate
19 jokes, offensive gestures, harmful attitudes and unwanted
20 actions make a positive impact toward ending sexual harassment,
21 abuse and assault; and

22 WHEREAS, Consent and boundaries can be violated online in a
23 number of ways; and

24 WHEREAS, Individuals can work together to make their
25 communities safer by providing prevention education and
26 increasing public awareness to avoid future harm from sexual
27 violence; therefore be it

28 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize the
29 month of April 2024 as "Sexual Assault Awareness Month" in
30 Pennsylvania; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize the
2 23rd anniversary of "Sexual Assault Awareness Month" to empower
3 more survivors and their loved ones on their journey to help,
4 hope and healing; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives encourage
6 communities to understand their role in ending sexual violence
7 in Pennsylvania and the United States; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives encourage
9 communities to commit to making a difference to ensure that
10 online platforms are safe and respectful for everyone by
11 practicing consent, keeping kids safe and supporting survivors.